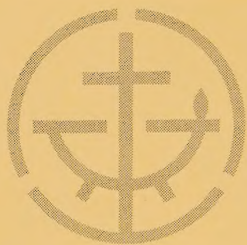


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A. A. Beecher

HENRY WARD BEECHER

A Study

OF HIS PERSONALITY, CAREER, AND
INFLUENCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

By JOHN R. HOWARD

NEW YORK
FORDS, HOWARD, & HULBERT

1891

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE activity of Henry Ward Beecher in public affairs grew directly out of his natural endowments and training, his acquired powers, and his religious impulse to regard man as God's child, and God as Father; consequently, this sketch of his part in the political life of the country has involved a consideration of his personality, and of the education and experiences that made him what he became—in brief, the history of his life.

In 1887 the present writer edited and published a collection of Mr. Beecher's "Patriotic Addresses in America and England, from 1850 to 1885," and prefaced it with the "Review of His Personality and Influence in Public Affairs," which constitutes this separate publication. Originally intended to cover only his political career, it grew, almost by necessity, to a somewhat larger form by reason of the desire to show the genuine springs of his action and the steady consistency of his course. The whole line of his public life for fifty years was singularly undeviating, as that of an active helper of the oppressed, a conservator of the good, and an inspirer of the best, in man.

His politics—like his religion, his literary labors, his pastoral methods, his power as an orator in pulpit and on platform—were, in a peculiar sense, the man.

For those, therefore, who wish a concise view of Henry Ward Beecher and his work—and many inquiries made of the publishing house with which the writer is connected show that there are such—this biographical sketch will to some extent, it is hoped, serve a good purpose. If its perusal shall also arouse a desire to know more of the man by reading the noble "Addresses" which it was written to introduce, it will serve an end still higher.

J. R. H.

NEW YORK, March, 1891.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

I.

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES.

JOHN RUSKIN, in the preface to his book entitled, "The Two Paths," on the importance of organic form in architectural decorative design, has this strong passage:—

"We are all of us willing enough to accept dead truths, or blunt ones; which can be fitted harmoniously into spare niches, or shrouded and confined at once out of the way, we holding complacently the cemetery keys and supposing we have learned something. But a sapling truth, with earth at its root and blossom on its branches; or a trenchant truth, that can cut its way through bars and sods; most men, it seems to me, dislike the sight or entertainment of, if by any means such guest or vision may be avoided. And indeed this is no wonder; for one such truth, thoroughly accepted, connects itself strangely with others, and there is no saying what it may lead to."

The central element of Henry Ward Beecher's character was his sensitiveness to truth. From his youth he eagerly desired it, earnestly sought it, welcomed it with delight, and then poured out his whole soul in using it for the good of man,—which he always believed to be the cause of God. To a remarkable extent, for one who worked in the midst of men and along the lines of social forces, he laid his course in obedience to principle, holding a sturdy loyalty to it amid all the swaying passions and policies by which he was surrounded. In one sense this was no credit to him, since it was his natural temperament. As he said in reference to facing the stormy English meetings: "I have expressed my views in any audience, and it never cost me a struggle. I never could help doing it." However, now that he is gone, our

inquiry does not so much take the attitude of praise or blame: we are concerned only to know what the man was; what were the relative points of strength and of weakness in his make-up; and how these combined with the movements and events around him, to bring about the unquestionable resultant of a personal influence, wider and more potent than that of any other American of his time. If that seems a strong statement, it must be considered that his influence—whatever it was—at no time owed anything to the accidents of inherited station, or the great leverage of public office, by which individuals may wield the powers of a people, but was the immediate effect of his own personality.

The special intent of this volume is to present a general view of Mr. Beecher's career with reference to the great political revolution which took place in the United States while he was in public life. But to separate his political activity from the rest of his life—domestic, social, and religious—is impossible, if one would get at the real sources of his conduct, the genuine secrets of his power. The natural endowments of the man; the influences under which he grew; the successive fields of his labor, with their opportunities and limitations; the unfolding of his character and capabilities; his modes of working, accumulation of knowledges, general and special preparations, tenses and moods of utterance; the gradual enlargement of his influence; the social and ecclesiastical and political entanglements which at times hampered his course; the steady outflow of energy, of thought, of stimulating impulse, in harmony with the humanitarian movement of the age, which distinguished him to the very end of his long life,—these considerations are all inseparable and essential in understanding any phase of his career.

His public utterances were all the outgrowth of the one grand theme of his thought and faith: *The fatherhood of God and the worth of man as God's child*,—not only the core but the very sum and substance of his teaching, from beginning to end. Whatever the special topic, that underlying principle was sure to be found at the bottom.

However variant the visible pattern—and surely few minds since Shakespeare's have laid hold on such a wondrous number and diversity of matters for treatment—the warp and backing was that maxim of his life. Whether upon his own platform in Plymouth pulpit, or lecturing on art or literature or economics, making an after-dinner speech, or writing a novel or a trifling paper or a letter of travel, thundering through times of war and commotion, or discussing policies and parties in the piping times of peace,—his work was all surrounded and permeated with an atmosphere of the brooding love of God and the duty of man to man.

An amusing instance of this characteristic is related.* At the lecture he delivered in Dublin, on "The Wastes and Burdens of Society," where the local magnates, although desirous of hearing the celebrated American orator, were in great trepidation lest he should say something about religion to the distaste of Irish Catholics, or about British politics, to the disturbance of civil order and governmental discipline in that turbulent town, the chairman introduced him as follows:—

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor to introduce to you a distinguished orator from Yankeeland. Mr. Beecher is not on this platform in his clerical character, so we are not to be treated to any exposition of his theological sentiments. Mr. Beecher is not here as a politician, and therefore we will not hear from him any exposition of his political principles. [*Hear, hear, and applause.*] But Mr. Beecher is here to deliver an address of more than ordinary social importance. As a well-known philanthropist, from his long experience, from the wonderful abilities the Great Master has gifted him with, and from his well known character as one of the most distinguished orators, we may anticipate, I think, an address—a lecture—that shall not only be instructive but delightful. I have great pleasure in introducing Mr. Beecher to your notice this evening."

Mr. Beecher, on coming forward, said:—

"I have been very kindly introduced by the distinguished and

* "A Summer in England (1886) with Henry Ward Beecher." Edited by James B. Pond. New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert.

honorable gentleman who has accompanied me, and therefore I accept the position assigned. I have not come to speak on theology; and you shall never know how much you have missed. [*Laughter.*] I have not come to speak on politics. I have enough of that in my own country [*laughter*], and even if I knew about your politics, I should think it very inexpedient, as one born abroad, to meddle with local affairs and local questions. I know that it is not necessary for one to know much about politics in order to make a good speaker; but, nevertheless, I accept the delimitation, and there is nothing left of me but this—that I am a man. That's enough. 'A man's a man for a' that.' And as to the other things, I give them a go-by, in the hope that some twenty or thirty years hence I may revisit you, and that you then will be very glad to hear my opinions about those other subjects."

Mr. Beecher gave the lecture in one of his own peculiar moods, caused by the attempt to confine him within certain bounds. Mr. Pond in telling the story says: "The audience soon had reason to believe that he had in some way, *perhaps unconsciously*, woven a great deal of religion and politics into the lecture; at least the chairman told me after the lecture that *he could see and feel it all through.*"

And so it was, at all times. His religion was not a matter for Sunday performance; it was that which filled his life and thought, for which and by which—as at once an aim and an inspiration—he did that which he found to do.

In a brief sketch, such as this must be, it is evident that the elements of the character, training, and general career of so large and effective a man must be but lightly touched upon rather than thoroughly studied; yet the present writer holds a consideration of them necessary to a proper comprehension of Mr. Beecher's course in connection with civil affairs. That it will be adequate or complete is not to be expected; such is a labor for broader powers and later years: but that it should be of interest, and of use in understanding the essential qualities of Henry Ward Beecher's great mind and greater heart, is the design and hope of the writer.

II.

HEREDITY, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION.

THE familiar thought that great men, however loftily they may tower above their contemporaries, are yet the product of their own times, has been recently applied to Mr. Beecher by the London *Globe*, a conservative Tory paper, having little sympathy with anything that he represented. It says:—

“He may be taken as a conspicuous illustration of the view that there is such a thing as greatness of personality, as distinguished from greatness in any particular capacity. * * * * * Henry Ward Beecher was the leading type of his own people in his own day; and as such he will doubtless be remembered.”

Indeed, it is as one peculiarly representing the highest ideal of American theories and practical citizenship that the man must be considered.

Henry Ward Beecher was a type of the best Americanism, by his ancestry and birthright. A widow, Mrs. Hannah Beecher, his earliest ancestor in this country, and her son John, came here from Kent, England, in 1638 with Master John Davenport's company at the time of the settlement of New Haven, Connecticut; and Andrew Ward, another of the same company, was his ancestor on his mother's side. He himself mentions, in one of his speeches in England during the war, the fact that his great-great-grandmother, Mary Roberts, was a full-blooded Welsh woman; and he felt that he owed no inconsiderable part of himself to the Welsh blood in his veins.

John Beecher, the immigrant, and his descendants, Joseph, Nathaniel, and David the father of Lyman, were

mighty men in stature and strength, Nathaniel and David being blacksmiths. Henry Ward was the eighth child of Lyman Beecher and Roxanna Foote, the latter of whom was a descendant of Andrew Ward, already mentioned. They were married in 1799; and Lyman Beecher, who brought the combative and somewhat disputatious temperament of his father, the blacksmith, into the profession of the ministry, settled first at East Hampton, Long Island, and twelve years later moved to Litchfield, Connecticut. Here, on the 24th of June, 1813, Henry Ward was born.

Thus we find him, at the outset, an offshoot of the sturdy English stock, infused with the highly sensitive and poetic Welsh temperament, planted on a stony, breezy, sunshiny hill of New England. His early years were to be spent amid that characteristically Puritan people, and subject to all the bracing atmospheric conditions of that time and region.

The training of children in these days, in respect to both their social, mental, and moral development, is so rich and full of interest on every side, that it is almost impossible to conceive what it was in Henry Ward Beecher's childhood. It is pitiful to look back at such a picture as Mr. Beecher has drawn of his own early school-days. From our point of view, it is hard to believe that children were so neglected; and, on the other hand, looking forward from that, it is hard to see how such a starved childhood could have grown to such a glorious manhood:—

“It was our misfortune, in boyhood, to go to a district school. A little, square, pine building, blazing in the sun, stood upon the highway, without a tree for shade or shadow near it; without bush, yard, fence, or circumstance to take off its bare, cold, hard, hateful look. Before the door, in winter, was the pile of wood for fuel; and there, in summer, were all the chips of the winter's wood.

“In winter we were squeezed into the recess of the furthest corner, among little boys, who seemed to be sent to school merely to fill up the chinks between the bigger boys. Certainly we were never sent for any such absurd purpose as an education. There were the great scholars; the school in winter was for them, not for us pickaninnies. We read and spelled twice a day,—unless something

happened to prevent, which did happen about every other day. For the rest of the time we were busy in keeping still. And a time we had of it, indeed! Our shoes always would be scraping on the floor, or knocking the shins of urchins who were also being 'educated.' All of our little legs together (poor, tired, nervous, restless legs, with nothing to do!) would fill up the corner with such a noise, that every ten or fifteen minutes the master would bring down his hickory ferule on the desk with a clap that sent shivers through our hearts to think how it would have felt if it had fallen somewhere else; and then, with a look that swept us all into utter extremity of stillness, he would cry, 'Silence, in that corner!' Stillness would last for a few minutes; but little boys' memories are not capacious. Moreover, some of the boys had great gifts of mischief, and some of mirthfulness, and some had both together. The consequence was that, just when we were the most afraid to laugh, we saw the most comical things to laugh at. Temptations which we could have vanquished with a smile out in the free air, were irresistible in our little corner where a laugh and a stinging slap were very apt to woo each other. So, we would hold on, and fill up; and others would hold on and fill up too; till, by and by the weakest would let go a mere whiffet of a laugh, and, then, down went all the precautions, and one went off, and another, another, touching off the others like a pack of fire-crackers! It was in vain to deny it. But, as the process of snapping our heads and pulling our ears went on with primitive sobriety, we each in turn, with tearful eyes and blubbling lips, declared 'we didn't mean to,' and that was true; and that we 'wouldn't do so any more,' and that was a fib, however unintentional; for we never failed to do just so again, and that about once an hour all day long.

"A woman kept the summer school, sharp, precise, unsympathetic, keen, and untiring. Of all ingenious ways of fretting little boys, doubtless her ways were the most expert. Not a tree was there to shelter the house. The sun beat down on the shingles and clapboards till the pine knots shed pitchy tears, and the air was redolent of warm pine-wood smell. The benches were slabs with legs in them. The desks were slabs at an angle, cut, hacked, scratched, each year's edition of jack-knife literature overlaying its predecessor, until in our day it already wore cuttings and carvings two or three inches deep. But if we cut a morsel, or stuck in pins, or pinched off splinters, the little sharp-eyed mistress was on hand, and one look from her eye was worse than a sliver in our foot, and one nip of her fingers was equal to a jab of a pin;—for we had tried both.

"We envied the flies —merry fellows, bouncing about, tasting of that apple-skin, patting away at this crumb of bread; now out of the window, then in again; on your nose, on your neighbor's cheek, off to the very schoolma'am's lips, dodging her slap, and then letting off a little real round and round buzz, up, down, this way, that way, and every way. O, we envied the flies more than anything, except the birds! The windows were so high that we could not see the grassy meadows; but we could see the tops of distant trees, and the far, deep, bounteous blue sky. There flew the robins; there went the blue-birds, and there went we. We followed that old Polyglott, the skunk-blackbird, and heard him describe the way they talked at the winding up of the Tower of Babel. We thanked every meadow-lark that sung on, rejoicing as it flew. Now and then a 'chipping-bird' would flutter on the very window-sill, turn its little head sidewise and peer on the medley of boys and girls. Long before we knew that it was in Scripture, we sighed—O, that we had the wings of a bird—we would fly away and be out of this hateful school. As for learning, the sum of all that we ever got at a district school would scarcely cover the first ten letters of the alphabet. One good, kind, story-telling, Bible-rehearsing aunt at home, with apples and ginger-bread premiums, is worth all the schoolma'ams that ever stood to see poor little fellows roast in those boy-traps called district schools."

Perhaps it would be hard to find anywhere a more apt and complete summing up of the characteristics with which this boy started life: physically strong, full of life, with keenly sensitive nerves, quick to see and to feel the influences of nature, especially in its aspects of poetry and freedom from constraint, with a heart swiftly responsive to sympathetic treatment, combustible with merriment and with tears, and a soul that instinctively reached out toward the beautiful and the good. That which does not appear at this time, and which must have been very slow in making its appearance, was the remarkable mental capacity of which the man was a notable example throughout his entire life, but which the boy seems to have shown no hint of.

What he received from his father and mother by direct inheritance certainly cannot be overlooked; and it is worth more than a passing glance to consider what was the domestic atmosphere in which he grew through boyhood and

youth to early manhood,—if only to show the shallowness of the small critics of our day, who because this great original thinker grew out luxuriantly in all directions beyond the limits of the trellises on which their own slender vines were trained, are fain to say, “He is a great talker; but he knows nothing of theology;” the fact being that in Henry Ward Beecher’s youth, in old Connecticut, theology was the food he ate, and the milk he drank, and the air he breathed, and the ground he trod, from his very earliest years. Theology was the only thing that he got a surfeit of, and doubtless it was out of his own familiarity with it, and his final perception of its barrenness for good in practical labor upon the souls of men, that he so impatiently went beyond it.

Dr. Lyman Beecher was a born belligerent. He was a man of thorough theological training himself, under Dr. Dwight of New Haven, and in the controversies and feuds of the Congregational and Presbyterian and Unitarian churches of his day he took no uncertain part. He was a revivalist, an ardent laborer in the Temperance cause, and in every direction one of the foremost clergymen of his time. A sermon preached in 1810 on the killing of Alexander Hamilton by Aaron Burr attracted special attention; and his famous Six Sermons on Intemperance (1814) were powerful factors in the reform then moving throughout New England. His family was large; his income of three hundred dollars, after five years increased to four hundred, gave even in those times a narrow margin. He was eccentric and peculiar, and absent-minded; in everything except the personal influencing of men to right living, the discussion of theoretical questions in theology and practical problems in morals, an eminently unpractical man. He carefully thought out his sermons, but usually preached them without notes, pouring them forth with great vehemence, and also with great effect upon his hearers. Keenly alive to the influences of music, and thoroughly unconventional, so far as outward appearances were concerned, he was accustomed to relieve the tension of his mind and nerves after preaching by violin-playing or, as like as not, by going to the

wood-pile and sawing wood. He was a man of tremendous impulses, and lightning-like changes of mood; a recognized thinker, a powerful orator, a genius of many sides. Though by no means a symmetrical character, he was an eminent force for good in his day.

In spite of Dr. Beecher's musical sensibility, he was curiously lacking in any perception of beauty in art, and his son Henry Ward's love for all such matters in later years was one of the things that he could not understand.

If the sources of impulsive power, the broad sense of morality, the mental alertness, the ardent earnestness for man, the lofty aspiration for Heavenly things, the rich humor, the quick wit, the careless freedom from conventionality, the subtle nerve-sensitiveness to music, and the magnificent physical frame, elasticity of muscle, and perfection of organic health, came from the father, the mother of Henry Ward Beecher contributed some elements without which he would not have been the man he was.

The great men have usually risen from families unknown before their advent; yet, whenever a man's career has made it worth while to seek out his progenitors, it is usually found that he had a mother of remarkable qualities.

Roxanna Foote was a woman of rare nature. Miss Catharine Beecher, the eldest of Dr. Beecher's thirteen children, in her "Educational Reminiscences" speaks of certain traits in the characters of both the mother and father which are worth notice. The mother, she says, had "a high ideal of excellence in whatever she attempted, a habit of regarding all knowledge with reference to its practical usefulness, and remarkable perseverance." She gives illustrations of Mrs. Beecher's esthetic taste and positive artistic talent, in making and painting a carpet from a useless bale of cotton that Dr. Beecher had bought for its cheapness, and in painting and decorating a set of old wooden chairs, in her beautiful needlework, her remarkable paintings of fruits, flowers, and birds, and her miniatures on ivory, all accomplished when the young mother of four or five children, a housekeeper, and a teacher of a boarding school.

The father passionately loved children, but the mother, though benevolent and tender, was not demonstrative. The father was imaginative, impulsive, and averse to study; while the mother calmly enjoyed both studying and teaching. The father, although profuse and poetical, was a trained dialectician; and yet the mother, untrained, he regarded as fully his equal in argument. She had a refined and shrinking nature, but in emergencies showed a native strength and power of command.

Mrs. Beecher's spiritual traits impressed themselves upon her children, but she gave them also their characteristic physiognomy; for the "Beecher look," so familiar to the public in the faces of Dr. Edward, Miss Catharine, Henry Ward, Mrs. Stowe, and others of the elder group, is not at all *Beecher*, but distinctively *Foote*, and may be seen—especially the fine nose, the full eye, the mobile, sensitive mouth, and the general contour of the mask—in many members of the old Connecticut family of that name. It was the Beecher power infusing the Foote refinement that found its consummate products in Harriet and Henry.

Mr. Beecher once told the present writer that his father was very irascible. "One day," said he, "being much annoyed by some hogs that kept getting into his garden, he seized his gun and rushed to the door. My mother anxiously followed, and cried, 'Oh Father, don't shoot the poor things!' He flashed back at her, 'Woman, go into the house!' and when he was telling me of it years afterward he said: 'Without a word or look she turned, quietly, majestically, and went in—but she didn't get in before I did. I threw my arms around her in an agony of self-reproach, and cried, "Forgive me—Oh forgive me!" She uttered no word, but she looked at me like a queen—and smiled—and kissed my face: my passion was gone and my offense forgiven.' Up to the last of his life he never spoke of her but with intensest admiration and loving remembrance. She must have been a noble woman."

This lovely mother died when little Henry was but three years old. His remembrances of her were vague, but full of tender and beautiful imaginings. He seems to

have cherished his slight memories and what he could learn of her, as a beautiful ideal which, throughout his life, appears in many exquisite passages of writing or of speech.

In one of his sermons occurs the following: "I can never say enough for women for my mother's sake, for my sisters' sake, for the sake of others that gathered in the days of my infancy about me, in return for what they have interpreted to me of the beauty of holiness, of the fullness of love, and of the heavenliness of those elements from which we are to interpret Heaven itself."

So much, then, for what Mr. Beecher inherited from his parents. Upon the death of his mother there came into his family another person of whom the man was never tired of saying beautiful things, as, for instance, this allusion to her in his "Fruits, Flowers, and Farming,"—"My dear Aunt Esther, who brought me up,—a woman so good and modest that she will spend ages in Heaven wondering how it happened that she ever got there, while the angels will always be wondering why she was not there from all eternity."

This excellent and beloved woman, a sister of Dr. Beecher, came to take charge of the family after Mrs. Beecher's death. A close economist, an accomplished cook, systematical and neat in all family arrangements, but gentle, loving, and a very soul of brooding motherly kindness, her well-ordered household moved along with Dr. Beecher's impulsive nature in perfect harmony. At the end of the year a second mother was brought to the home, of whom Miss Catharine says that she

"Introduced a more complete and refined style of housekeeping, which she had acquired or observed in the families of her two uncles, Gov. King, of Maine, and Rufus King, a former ambassador of the United States to England. Under her quiet and lady-like rule, I again was trained to habits of system, order, and neatness, entirely foreign to my natural inherited traits, as it respects personal habits, while in the most unfavorable circumstances, she was a model of propriety and good taste. . . . She had a most sweet and gentle speech, which, even in the most trying circumstances, never became loud or harsh."

Mrs. Beecher, in writing to her former home about this family into which she had come, says:—

“It seems the highest happiness of the children (the elder ones especially) to have a reading circle, and they have all, I think, fine capacities for learning. Edward probably will be a great scholar. Catharine is a fine looking girl, and in her mind I find all that I expected. Mary will make a fine woman; will be rather handsome than otherwise. The four youngest are very pretty. George comes next to Mary. Harriet and Henry come next, and they are always hand in hand. They are as lovely children as I ever saw,—amiable, affectionate, and very bright.”

Now, to add to the foregoing pictures of the family, take this sentence from Miss Catharine again. Speaking of her first experience in school teaching she says: “The only pleasant recollection is that of my own careful and exact training under my most accurate and faithful brother Edward, and my reproduction of it to my sister Harriet and two others of my brightest pupils.”

Thus, though it would appear that the early schooling of little Henry was less than nothing, the qualities that he inherited from his parents, and the advantages of mutual training, of intelligent conversation, of varied reading in the midst of a family circle of unusual aptitude and varied acquirements, gave him advantages of no mean quality; while it is not at all unlikely that the early neglect of his little mind gave him a chance to solidify and develop that splendid physique which after all was the source of much of his power.

The society in Litchfield at the time of his youth was of a rather high intellectual grade, there being in the town a well known law school and several other institutions of learning; it was an era of what Emerson calls “plain living and high thinking.” This was in one respect unfavorable to the development of the boy, inasmuch as it tended to separate the father’s intellectual sympathies from his children, leaving them largely to shift for themselves. It was, however, but according to the temper of the time; and the conditions of their Litchfield home resulted in an atmosphere highly favorable to the growth of character, the honorable

examples of life about him exerting an influence upon his whole future life. He has several times expressed his gratitude to God that his early life was passed without knowledge of impurity or vice of any kind. He was singularly favored by his surroundings in that regard; and his knowledge of such things, utilized in later years with great dramatic power, in his "Lectures to Young Men," not only, but in all his course of preaching, resulted from a careful gathering of information in conversation with those who knew. For instance, his apparent familiarity with the modes and influences of gambling, in his Indianapolis lectures to young men, came from a series of talks which he had with a gambler in that city, with whom he sought an acquaintance for the express purpose of learning something about the facts, the bearings of which he was going to discuss. So that, although he had never been inside of a gambling house, and did not even know one card from another, his own intuitions of human nature, his quick sympathy with others and power to put himself by imagination in their places, enabled him to clothe the bare bones of fact with such living power that the pictures were recognized as truthful and vivid to the last degree.

He says in one place: "I thank God for two things—first that I was born and bred in the country, of parents that gave me a sound constitution and a noble example. I never can pay back what I owe to my parents. . . . And I am thankful that I was brought up in circumstances where I never became acquainted with wickedness." And again: "I never was sullied in act, nor in thought, nor in feeling, when I was young. I grew up as pure as a woman. And I cannot express to God the thanks which I owe my mother, and to my father, and to the great household of sisters and brothers among whom I lived. And the secondary knowledge of those wicked things which I have gained in later years in a professional way, I gained under such guards that it was not harmful to me."

Combative as Dr. Beecher was, there must have been in him much of the power of sweetness and self-control which the son so markedly exhibited during his own season of

greatest tribulation. In a sermon on "The Moral Teaching of Suffering," Mr. Beecher says:—

"I recollect distinctly, on one occasion, when I was not more than six years old, that a man of great violence of temper came to see my father, and rated him with such a scolding as I had never heard. I looked at my father with amazement, as he sat perfectly still and tranquil. When the man had done, and felt relieved, father began, in the gentlest manner, to say to him, 'Well, if all you say is true, I think you are right in the severity of your remarks; but I suppose that if in any regard you are not correct, you are willing to be set right.' 'Yes,' said the man with a growl, 'of course I am.' 'Well, will you allow me to make one statement?' said father, humbling himself before the man. 'Yes.' So father began with a little matter, and stated it; and then he went a little further; and then a little further; until, by and by, the man began to lose color, and at last broke out, 'I have been all wrong in this matter; I do not understand it.' After he had gone away, father said to me, in a sort of casual manner, 'Give up, and beat 'em.' I got an idea of self-restraint under provocation, which I never could have got by all the instruction in the world which came to me merely in the form of ideas, and in picture-forms and fables; I had before me the sight of my father suffering—for his pride was naturally touched (though you might not think it from his posterity, yet there *was* pride in my father to some extent); he felt it keenly; and under the keenness of the feeling he still maintained perfect calmness and perfect sweetness. He overcame the man by suffering. He suffered reproach and abuse, and maintained himself under them."

It will not do in this connection to omit mention of Charles Smith, an old negro who used to saw wood for Dr. Beecher, and do odd "chores" about the place, and to whom Mr. Beecher has frequently alluded in terms of profound affection and gratitude. Little Henry occupied the same room with him, and records the undying impression made upon him by the man's genuine piety, lovely character, and profound enjoyment of his religion. Mr. Beecher says: "Every night he would set the candle at the head of his bed and pray, and sing, and laugh, and I bear record that his praying made a profound impression upon my mind. I never thought whether it was right or wrong, I only thought, 'How that man does enjoy it!'"

What enjoyment there must be in such prayer as his.' I gained more from that man of the idea of the desirableness of prayer, than I ever did from my father or mother. My father was never an ascetic, he had no sympathy with anything of a monkish tendency; and yet this poor man, more than he, led me to see that there should be real overflowing gladness and thanksgiving in prayer."

He was a shy and diffident boy; his natural articulation was thick and indistinct; his memory was poor, and to all influences except those of nature without and the affectionate appeals of domestic love within the home circle, he seems to have been rather dull than bright. When he was ten years old he was put in the young ladies' school, kept by his sister Catharine, in Hartford, where among forty girls he was the only boy. One who knew his early days writes:—

"Here his mirthfulness began to develop very rapidly. He kept the little company of thirty or forty girls in continuous roars of laughter. His store of fun was exhaustless. The school was divided into two divisions in grammar, with leaders on either side, and at certain periods public examinations were held, when the successful competitors were suitably rewarded. On such occasions Henry was not wanted by either division, as he would invariably throw the whole division into convulsive merriment. One day his sister took him aside to a private apartment to drill him in the rules and definitions, which he found almost impossible to commit to memory. 'Now, Henry,' said the teacher, 'A is the indefinite article, you see, and must be used only with a singular noun. You can say *a man*, but you can't *a men*, can you?' 'Yes, I can say *Amen* too,' said the mischievous little rogue. 'Father always says it at the end of his prayers.' 'Come, Henry, don't be always joking; now decline *he*. Nominative *he*, possessive *his*, objective *him*. You see *his* is possessive. Now, you can say *his* book, but you can't say *him* book.' 'Yes, I do say hymn-book too,' said the incipient scholar, with a cunning, quizzical little smile. At this point the teacher, failing to contain herself any longer, burst into laughter, which pleased him immensely. 'But now, Henry, seriously, do attend to the active and passive voice. Now, *I strike* is active, you see, because if you strike you do something. But *I am struck* is passive, because if you are struck you don't do anything, do you?' 'Yes I do; I strike back again.'"

After a year of Hartford he was sent to the little town of Bethlehem, not far from Litchfield, to attend a school kept by the Rev. Mr. Langdon, where he gained but little except the further development of his love of outdoor study and familiarity with the life of nature.

At twelve, he was plunged into an entirely new environment, by the removal of his father to Boston, to take the pastorate of the Park Street Congregational Church. Here he was confined among streets and house-walls, not only, but also still further imprisoned by being placed in the Boston Latin School, which, although it did give him the rudiments of Latin grammar, gave him but little else, except a sense of restraint and an irrepressible desire of outbreaking rebellion.

Boston days, however, did really give him an uplift.

"A green, healthy, country lad, with a round, full, red-checked face, at about thirteen years of age we entered this city of marvels. How fast our heart beat, on Sunday morning, to hear so many bells clamoring all together and filling the heavens with calls to worship. One solitary bell had we been used to hear: one sweet bell, that rolled out its tones for a mile around and more, rising and falling as the wind blew or lulled, and having the whole air to itself, to make its own music in. This jangle and sweet dissonance of Boston bells was among the first things that touched the secret spring of fancy, and sent us up into dreams and imaginings. . . . Next to Boston bells were Boston ships. We shall not again see anything that will so profoundly affect our imagination. We stood and gazed upon the ship, and smelt the sea-air, and looked far out along the water to the horizon, and all that we had ever read of buccaneers, of naval battles, of fleets of merchantmen, of explorations into strange seas, among rare and curious things, rose up in a cloud of mixed and changing fancies, until we scarcely knew whether we were in the body or out."

He mentions also the Charlestown Navy Yard, with long rows of unmounted cannon; the mounted sea-batteries; clambering all over the men-of-war building in the ship-house, and the dismantled ships that lay against the pier head. The result of all this was not only the unconscious filling of his imagination with material for future use, but

the arousing in him of an intense desire and firm determination to go to sea.

Here the father showed his tact in management by his skillful dealing with the boy. He granted cheerfully the lad's wish to go to sea, but said, "Of course you do not want to be a common sailor?" "No, sir, I want to be a midshipman, and after that a commodore." "Yes, yes," answered the father, "well, to do that you must study mathematics and navigation, and all that."

And thus the young fellow went with cordial zest to Amherst, Mass., where at the Mount Pleasant academy, under the tuition of Mr. Fitzgerald, a West Point graduate whose manly ways captivated him, he worked hard and really made excellent progress in mathematics; and this, not mechanically, but as the West Point fashion is, thoroughly, and with understanding. "You must not only know, but you must know that you know," was Mr. Fitzgerald's dictum; and the boy's knowledge was frequently tested controversially by his instructor, to whom, as Mr. Beecher has said in later years, he felt that he owed his habit of becoming well-grounded in facts for the formation of his opinions, and his power to freely and good-naturedly sustain his positions in the face of storm and argument.

At this same school, also, he received a training of incalculable benefit at the hands of Professor John E. Lovell, the elocutionist. In his "Yale Lectures on Preaching" Mr. Beecher says:—

"No knowledge is real knowledge unless you can use it without knowing it. You do not understand the truth of anything, until it has so far sunk into you that you have almost forgotten where you got it. . . . If you desire, to have your voice at its best and to make the best use of it, you must go into a drill which will become so familiar that it ceases to be a matter of thought, and the voice takes care of itself. . . . It was my good fortune in early academical life to fall into the hands of your estimable fellow-citizen, Professor Lovell, now of New Haven, and for a period of three years I was drilled incessantly (you might not suspect it, but I was) in posturing, gesture, and voice-culture. . . . It was the skill of that gentleman, that he never left a man-

ner with anybody. He simply gave his pupils the knowledge of what they had in themselves."

In continuing the same subject with reference to his later studies at the theological seminary, Mr. Beecher says:—

"There was a large grove lying between the Seminary and my father's house, and it was the habit of my brother Charles and myself and one or two others to make the night, and even the day, hideous with our voices as we passed backward and forward through the wood, exploding all the vowels from the bottom to the very top of our voices. The drill that I underwent first and last produced, not an oratorical manner, but a physical instrument, that accommodated itself readily to every kind of thought and every shape of feeling, and obeyed the inward will in the outward realization of the results of rules and regulations."

Now, for the first time in his life, were the young man's true powers and sensibilities laid hold on by the wholesome stimulus of ambition, the real aspiration of accomplishing a purpose. True, his naval fancy soon faded out in the substantial enjoyment of developing his newly-awakened powers; moreover, his rescue from the distracting excitements of the city (for simple as they were, they were wild dissipation to him) and his return to the more wholesome influences of country life had a most favorable effect upon him, physically and spiritually; for at the end of the first year, in the midst of a general revival of interest in religion, his whole heart turned God-ward, and he united with his father's church in Boston, and delighted his father's heart by announcing his determination to take up the ministry, as a profession. He spent two years more at Mount Pleasant preparing for college, and entered Amherst at the end of that time.

It is interesting to see how apparently slight occurrences at that time entered deep into his soul, and produced effects that were visible during the very plenitude of his power in later days; for instance, in his sermon entitled "The Background of Mystery," preached some forty-four years after the event, he gives the following incident:—

"Once, when a boy, I stood on Mount Pleasant, at Amherst, and saw a summer thunder-storm enter the valley of the Con-

necticut from the North. Before it was all bright; centerwise it was black as midnight, and I could see the fiery streaks of lightning striking down through it; but behind the cloud—for I could see the rear—it was bright again. In front of me was that mighty storm hurtling through the sky; and before it I saw the sunlight, and behind it I saw the sunlight; but to those that were under the center of it there was no brightness before or behind it. They saw the thunder-gust, and felt the pelting rain, and they were enveloped in darkness and heard the rush of mighty winds; while I, that stood afar off, could see that God was watering the earth and washing the leaves, and preparing the birds for a new outcome of jubilee, and giving to men refreshment and health. So I conceive that our human life here, with its sorrows and tears, as compared with the eternity that we are going into, is no more than the breath of a summer thunder-storm; and if God sees that our experience in this world is to work out an exceeding great reward in the world to come, there is no mystery in it—to Him.”*

The fact that he was the son of the foremost preacher of New England and indeed of the whole country, distinguished young Beecher for notice among his classmates at college; but he did not rest on his father's reputation, for, as is learned from the reports of his classmates, he made himself felt immediately and continuously among them in all matters of earnest moral and religious influence, of physical and athletic sports, and of general literary and rhetorical effort.

Dr. Holmes, in his eloquent paper concerning Mr. Beecher's English war speeches, entitled the “Minister Plenipotentiary,” calls him “the same lusty, warm-hearted, strong-fibered, brave-hearted, bright-souled, clear-eyed creature, as he was when the college boys at Amherst acknowledged him as the chiefest among their foot-ball kickers.” He was interested in matters of reform, having decided anti-slavery views and being a total abstainer from ardent spirits; made himself a power in the class prayer-meetings; and always attracted the attention of his fellows by the ability and originality of his essay-writing and his fluency and eloquence in debate and extempore speaking.

* Printed in Mr. Beecher's volume entitled, “*Evolution and Religion.*”

His fount of humor flowed constantly, and irrepressibly. It was a frequent sight to see a throng about him and to hear from it roars of laughter. Already he was showing a peculiar combination of native powers that furnished the tools for his future work.

His interest in phrenology began at this time. He says: "I suppose I inherited from my father a tendency or intuition to read man. The very aptitude that I recognize in myself would indicate a pre-existing tendency. In my Junior college year, I became, during the visit of Spurzheim, enamored of phrenology, which has been for many years [this was in 1872] the foundation on which I have worked, although I have not made it a special study. Admit, if you please, it is not exactly the true thing; and admit, if you will, that there is little form or system in it; yet I have worked with it much as the botanist worked with the Linnæan system of botany, the classification of which is very convenient, although an artificial one. There is no natural system that seems to correspond to human nature so nearly as phrenology does."

Mr. Beecher's use of phrenology was rather as a convenient classification and intelligible nomenclature of the faculties of the mind, than as a full acceptance of the phrenological theory of the physical, cerebral organs of those faculties. Former writers on mind considered the mental acts of attention, perception, conception, memory, etc., as faculties; while the phrenologists regarded these acts as merely the *modes of action* of the faculties, which they otherwise named and classified. Mr. Beecher thus stood between the two; and, as he so often did, took for his own practical purposes whatever of good he found in both, without committing himself fully in theory to either.

With him was interested in phrenology the late O. S. Fowler, his classmate, a man who probably did more than any other to spread the practical knowledge and utilization of the system among the American people. It was in connection with phrenology, also, that young Beecher first began his experience as a public lecturer.

In Mr. Beecher's Statement of Belief before the Congre-

gational Association of New York and Brooklyn, Oct. 13, 1882, he speaks of this matter and of other interesting points in his college course:—

“I never undertook to preach by any system of philosophy based on phrenology, but the whole nomenclature of mental phenomena [in prevalent metaphysical philosophies] was so vague it had no individuality in it, no power of individualizing; it generalized all the way through; while phrenology brought into view as distinct qualities, *combativeness*, *self-esteem*, *pride*, the *love of approbation*, the *love of praise*, *conscience*, *hope*, *reason*—that is, causal and analogical reason. It gave definite names, so that one could read a man; just as you can by taking type spell out a word, so by taking the different faculties you get to know the man. This working apparatus of phrenology I embraced. I analyzed men's actions by it. I could say to myself what sprang from this or that organ: here *conscience* is at work, here *self-esteem*, and so on. I do not undertake to say it was the most accurate system; but I do say it gave definiteness, it gave a man an insight into his fellow-man. It told him just where to strike and just what to strike with, and it was altogether a more practical, personal, and usable system than any of the metaphysical systems that had been in vogue.

“Then, besides that, I early studied science with enthusiasm. I was a pupil of Professor Hitchcock at Amherst College. I was the first two years a dull scholar [in science] because I was studying literature, history, and *belles lettres*, but when I came to my junior and senior years I bent myself to mental philosophy and scientific studies, and I have kept along the line of the front of scientific investigation ever since, and these two elements have underlain and been very potent to form my theological statements. When, therefore, I am judged I ask to be judged by my philosophy, and not by a very different one which my critic may hold.

“The result has been unfavorable in many cases,—that is to say, unfavorable to my reputation in the community. It set good men a great many times apart, by misunderstanding. It has caused grief to some men that were closely connected with me. I know I have their confidence as to my personal piety and as to my general conduct, but they fear I am straying so far from “the good old sound way” that it is a matter of mourning. I do not think so; I think I am coming nearer and nearer to the good old sound way. I think my views conform to Scripture a great deal more than those in which I was originally educated. In regard

to scientific investigation, I see the day coming when one of the most powerful arguments for the inspiration of the Bible will be that it laid itself right along on the assumption of truths that were unknown at the time they were written and by the person by whom they were written. It is a remedial book. It lays itself along the line of human development and human want in a manner that no man can account for except by superintending Providence. My scientific and philosophical views lead me to a deeper and a deeper faith in the word of God."

During his last two years in college, he was very active,—teaching in district schools, lecturing and zealously working in Christian enterprises, and taking finally the regular care of Sunday services held in a school-house near Amherst. During this period, he says, "growing constantly and warmly in sympathy with my father, in taking sides with orthodoxy that was in battle in Boston with Unitarianism, I learned of him all the theology that was current at that time. In the quarrels also between Andover and East Windsor and New Haven and Princeton—I was at home in all these distinctions. I got the doctrines just like a row of pins on a paper of pins. I knew them as a soldier knows his weapons. I could get them in battle array." He was graduated from the college in 1834, and immediately went to Cincinnati, whither his father had been called, from the Park Street Church in Boston, to the presidency of Lane Theological Seminary, while at the same time he held the pastorate of the Second Presbyterian Church. Here, of course, Mr. Beecher received the customary theological training which every student in a Presbyterian theological seminary is supposed to receive, but, moreover, he was drawn actively into the controversy between Dr. Wilson, representing the old-school doctrines of what has been called "The Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Calvinistic Fatalism of God's Sovereignty" on the one hand, and on the other his father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, an ardent partisan of the then "New School Theology" of New England, pivoting on "man's free agency."

The violent opposition of Dr. Wilson to Dr. Beecher culminated in the trial of the latter for heresy before the

Presbytery. This issuing in a vindication of Dr. Beecher, Dr. Wilson appealed to the Synod, where the cause was tried again and with the same result. Before this came about, however, the contending forces had already clashed in various ways. Dr. Wilson seems to have been the aggressor in every instance.

In the autobiography of Lyman Beecher* there is an amusing and characteristic description written by Miss Harriet E. Beecher, later known as Mrs. H. B. Stowe, of the examination of her brother George before Presbytery with the view to his ordination as a Presbyterian minister. Dr. Beecher's elder sons William and Edward were already in the ministry. A paragraph written by Dr. Beecher in one of the circular letters which they were accustomed to send around to every branch of the family,—each one adding a few lines and passing the document on by mail to the nearest family station for further additions,—gives a glimpse at the early family life in the matter of theology; which, be it remembered, is one of our objective points of inquiry. Miss Beecher's lively description may be aptly prefaced by the paragraph here quoted:—

"William, why do you not write to your father? Are you not my first-born son? Did I not carry you over bogs a-fishing, a-straddle of my neck, on my shoulders, and, besides clothing and feeding, whipping you often to make a man of you, as you are, and would not have been without? Don't you remember studying theology with your father, sawing and splitting wood in that wood-house in Green street, Boston, near by where you found your wife? Little do those know who have rented that tenement since, how much orthodoxy was developed and imbodyed there; and now why should all this fruit of my labors be kept to yourself?"

Besides William and Edward, George was now about to be examined for the ministry; Henry Ward had just come from Amherst College, and had entered Lane Seminary; while Charles and Thomas and James were, in spite of temporary aberrations of fancy, destined to the same high calling.

* "Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D." Edited by Charles Beecher. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1865.

But to return to Miss Beecher and her Presbytery:—

“At last the moderator calls the meeting to order. They proceed to business. They are to examine a candidate. The candidate is Mr. George Beecher, a *New School man*; but that is not the worst—a Taylorite!!

“Do you see, in the front pew, a tall, grave-looking man, of strong and rather harsh features, very pale, with a severe seriousness of face, and with great formality and precision in every turn and motion? Well, if you see him, that man is Dr. Wilson. His great ivory-headed cane leans on the side of the pew by him, and in his hand he holds the Confession of Faith.

“The candidate sits on the pulpit stairs, so that he may face the Presbytery, and the examining committee are called on: ‘Dr. Wilson, in Philosophy.’ Here follows, ‘Mr. Beecher, what is matter and what is mind, and what is the difference ’twixt and ’tween, and what is Mechanics, and Optics, and Hydrostatics, and what is Mental Philosophy, and what is Moral Philosophy, and what is right and wrong, and what is truth, and what is virtue, and what are the powers of the mind, and what is intellect, susceptibilities, and will, and conscience,’—and everything else, world without end, amen! After this the doctor’s grave face gradually relaxes into a smile, which seems like the melting of a snow-drift as he says that he has ‘pursued this branch of the examination as far as might be deemed expedient.’

“‘Mr. Moderator,’ says one, ‘I move that the examination be sustained.’ ‘I second it,’ says another.

“The moderator then says, ‘Those who sustain this examination say Ay.’

“Now hark—‘Ay! ay! ay!’

“‘Those of contrary mind, No.’ No answer. So this is over.

“Next topic is now announced: ‘Theology!’ Now you may see the brethren bending forward, and shuffling, and looking wise. Over in the pew opposite to us are the students of the Lane Seminary, with attentive eyes. There is Theodore Weld, all awake, nodding from side to side, and scarce keeping still a minute.

“‘The examiner in Theology, Brother Gallagher.’ This is the tall son of Anak whom I have written of aforetime—the great Goliath, whose awful brows and camp-meeting hymns used so to awe and edify me. He rises very leisurely, and gives a lunge forward, precipitating his unwieldy size into a chair without much regard to graceful disposition, and with a deep, deliberate voice, begins.

“The beauty of it all is that Gallagher is a warm friend to

George, and of similar sentiments. The appointing him to examine was a friendly motion of the moderator. . . . He confined his examination merely to the broad and obvious truths of Christianity, and then sat down.

"But now comes the fiery trial. The moderator announces, 'Any of the brethren have a right to question the candidate.' You must have seen before now some of them fidgeting on their seats, and waiting their turn. Then such a storm of questions rains in:—

"'Mr. Beecher, do you believe in the doctrine of election? Will you please to state your views on that subject?' 'Mr. Beecher, do you believe in the imputation of Adam's sin?' 'Mr. Beecher, do you believe infants are sinners as soon as they are born?' 'Do you believe that infants have unholy natures?' 'Do you believe that men are able of themselves to obey the commandments of God?' 'Mr. Beecher, do you believe men are active or passive in regeneration?' 'Mr. Beecher, do you make any distinction between regeneration and conversion?' 'Mr. Beecher, do you think that men are punished for the guilt of Adam's first sin?' 'Do you believe in imputed righteousness?'

"There was George—eyes flashing and hands going, turning first to right and then to left. 'If I understand your question, sir,'—'I do not understand your terms, sir.' 'Do you mean by nature thus and so? or so?' 'In what sense do you use the word imputation?' 'I don't exactly understand you, sir.' 'Yes, sir' (to right). 'No, sir' (to left). 'I should think so, sir' (in front).

"So far I wrote when I heard George, and father, and Edward coming in from meeting; for Edward is with us—poked in like a ghost upon us one day just after George's examination. The first that father knew of the matter was seeing him going by the window, and exclaiming, 'There's a man looks like Edward!' and the next minute we were all electrified by seeing him standing among us.

"To-night Edward and Professor Sturtevant, father and George, have been holding a long chat. At last father and Edward went down cellar to saw wood. Don't that seem natural? I heard the word 'foreordination' through the parlor floor, so I knew what they were talking about.* I have come up and left them. . . .

"Now to finish the account of Presbytery. The examination lasted nearly two hours and a half, after which the farther con-

* This little touch reveals the theologic atmosphere in which the whole Beecher family was reared as perfectly as volumes of description could do.—Ed.

sideration of that subject was postponed till examination had taken place in other branches. The next day the Presbytery were called upon to see if they had any remarks to make upon the examination thus far. Then such a war of words!

"The way of proceeding is to call over the names of the whole Presbytery in order, and each one, when his name is called, has the liberty of rising and speaking as long as he will. The whole day was taken up in this way. I went only in the afternoon, and what I heard was (apart from moral considerations) sufficiently diverting.

"There are men—one or two, I mean,—whose minds have been brought up in a catechetical treadmill—who will never say 'Confession of Faith' without taking off their hats, and who have altogether the appearance of thinking that the Bible is the *next best book* to the Catechism. These men are, of course, mortally afraid of heresy—or 'hear say,' as an old woman very pertinently pronounced it—and their remarks on this subject were truly lucid. . . .

"The discussion, as I have said, lasted all day. In the evening we came, and they went at it again. There was quite an audience in the house, as preaching had been expected. All the Presbytery had finished their remarks except father and Dr. Wilson, who, as the oldest, came last on the list. Father, as first called on, rose, and went through a regular statement of what he conceived to be the views expressed by the candidate, and a regular argument to show that they were in agreement with the Confession of Faith. He spoke well, clearly and persuasively, and was occasionally a little humorous. He began by saying that it was his belief that, however they might differ in points of opinion, they were all honest, well-intentioned men. 'We are honest!' (bringing down his fist). But then he said that there were some dangers in this meeting together in Presbytery; that ministers were so much accustomed to command the *whole ship* at home that they did not always feel exactly tractable in a Presbytery; 'and I hope,' said he, 'that, for the future, our elders will take better care of us' (here a general smile went round among the elders).

"Toward the close of the speech he said that, if the case should be carried up to the Synod, he should be prepared to prove even more fully many points; 'and in that case,' said he, bringing down his forefinger, 'I shall think myself *happy*, King Agrippa, to speak more fully of this matter.' He also insinuated that if Presbyteries, and Synods, and all the legislative bodies

should turn out and reject all who held those sentiments, yet they could not stop their progress. 'No,' said he, 'we shall still live; we shall stand on God's earth, and breathe his air, and preach his Gospel as *we* believe it.'

"When father sat down Dr. Wilson rose up, and made a speech of about half an hour, in which he stated that he believed that the candidate was not a Christian, and knew nothing experimentally about Christianity, and that he firmly believed that he and all those who held the same sentiments with him, 'would never see the gates of eternal bliss.'

"This was abundantly courteous for Dr. Wilson, since he merely shut us out of heaven this time, without pronouncing sentence any more definitely. Many people say that it is altogether the mildest and most temperate speech they ever heard him make. After this speech the question was taken, though with much difficulty and opposition; and on calling the roll, the examination was sustained by a majority of twenty-three. About twelve o'clock at night we found ourselves once more at home and in a state of high excitement, and sat up about half an hour longer to fight over the battle to Catharine, who had not been able to go out."

Of course, years of such surroundings as this, followed, as were the events just related, by increasing bitterness on the side of the attacking party (who, to the credit of the Presbyteries concerned, seem to have got the worst of every judicial combat); the studies of the course itself; the ensuing trials of his father for heresy, together with the lively correspondence among friends and foes, and the family discussions of all these controverted points and persons, kept young Beecher's mind alert in study of all the close theological distinctions, and familiarized him with the whole ground as no mere seminary curriculum could have done.

The result of this theological warfare, however, was very depressing to Henry Ward, who found less and less promise of fruitfulness in such a long continued course of dialectics, in which each combatant strongly held to his own views, and no result was ever reached. Indeed, he became convinced at that early day that men are most positive in theology about things of which they know the least; they are most dogmatical on what they call "funda-

mentals" for which they find least solid foundations in the Holy Scriptures or in nature. He felt, already, after a childhood and youth, and a young manhood, spent in the atmosphere of disputatious theology, that (as he says in his sermon entitled "The Golden Net") "the question is not to be with the plow and the harrow, but with the harvest. The farmer that raises the best wheat in the best quantity, and in the best manner, and constantly, is the best farmer, no matter what his tools are."

In one of the family circular letters already alluded to, written shortly after young Beecher had got at his pastoral work, occurs the following passage addressed by him to this same brother George, who seems to have tended toward the belief in the possibility of Christian "perfection:"—

"As to perfectionism, I am not greatly troubled with the fact of it in myself, or the doctrine of it in you; for I feel sure that if you give yourself time and prayer, you will settle down right, whatever the right may be; and I rejoice, on this account, that your judgment has led you to forbear publishing, because, after we have *published*, if we do not hit exactly right, there is a vehement temptation *not* to advance but rather to nurse and defend our published views. The treatises which have had influence in this world from generation to generation are those which have been matured, re-thought, re-cast, delayed. Apples that ripen early are apt to be worm-eaten, and decay early at any rate; late fruit keeps best."

His early experiences however, while they taught him how easily men may be mistaken in their philosophizings even while most confident that they are correct, thus made him feel free all his life long to let his humor play pleasantly about the heads of those who dogmatize; and yet, in the necessity of some systematic mode of regarding the truths of religion he was a firm believer, and not only can there be found in his works no passages inconsistent with this view but those are numerous which testify to his high estimate of reason in the philosophy of spiritual matters.

In his "Yale Lectures" he says:—

"It is very desirable, I think, that every preacher should have not merely gone through *a* system, but that he should have studied comparative theology. He ought to study that system

on which he expects to base his ministry ; and it is also desirable that he should take cross-views of differing systems of theology—for a variety of reasons. You may think that you are going to preach some particular system,—but most of you will not, even if you try. You may take your teachers' views of theology and preach them for a while, but they will not suit you long. Every man who is fit to preach will, before many years, begin to have an outline of his own theology very distinctly marked out. But it is always necessary to know what other men have thought, to practice close thinking, to be drilled in sharp and nice discrimination, and to have a mind that is not slatternly and loose, but which knows how to work philosophically. . . . You must acquire the habit of thinking, of looking at truth, not in isolated and fragmentary forms, but in all its relations ; and of using it constantly as an instrument for producing good. You see I do believe in the science of theology, though I may not give my faith to any particular school of it in all points. But no school can dispense with a habit of thinking according to the laws of cause and effect.

“Theology is osteology, and a skeleton is a poor thing to live with. But that which makes a man handsome is not being without bones. Some people say, because I occasionally hit theology a slap, that I do not believe in it. Indeed, I do believe in it ; but I believe in something else besides. Theology ought to be inside ; it is the frame on which you build everything. I believe in the succulency and the elasticity of the nerve, and the bloom and beauty of the skin that overlies it all ; but what would all these things be if there were not any bones there to lay them upon, and by which they could stand up and be operated ? Men would all be gelatinous ; no better than so many jelly-fish. So theology has its own sphere and function.”

Thus, while he had from the first a clear estimate of the importance of theologic training,—of which he was getting a larger share than falls to the lot of the average student,—yet his soul was impatient for action. This youthful David felt oppressed and encumbered by the Saul's armor and weapons which he had been testing long enough to feel that his preparation for the fight was to come in another way.

In a letter written to Dr. John H. Raymond,* about a

* “Life and Letters of John H. Raymond, First President of Vassar College.” New York : Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1881.

year after his going East (1848), Mr. Beecher mentions a theological dispute then raging over Dr. Bushnell's teachings:—

"I see no benefit in a controversy. It will be a fierce technical dispute about propositions, at the expense in the churches of vital godliness. . . . Others may blow the bellows and turn the doctrines in the fire and lay them on the anvil of controversy, and beat them with all sorts of hammers into all sorts of shapes; but I shall busy myself with *using* the sword of the Lord, not in *forging* it."

This was the lesson which he learned very early. He well knew the processes by which the doctrines were fused and forged and changed from age to age, but he felt in himself the ability for a higher craft than the smith's; and how effectively he wielded his powers for fifty years the world knows.

But there was another part of his course in the seminary which was of incalculable value. He says:—

"I had the good fortune to be under Professor Stowe in my theological training. Those who have gone through a course with him need not be told how much knowledge he has, nor his keen and crystalline way of putting that knowledge. The advantages which I derived from his teaching, his way of taking hold of Scripture, the knowledge I got of the Bible as a whole, are inestimable to me. In looking over my old note-books, which I filled independently of my course there, but which were partly in consequence of it and partly from teaching in the Bible class, I found I had gone then very nearly through the New Testament with close and careful study, and had formed an intimate acquaintance with it, before I began to preach regularly. In the early years of my ministry, I engaged in a great amount of exegetical study and interpretation of the word of God, having one service a week which was mainly devoted to that work. The preliminary acquisition of the power to do that will abbreviate your after-work more than you can tell. Do not believe that your enthusiasm will be a light always burning. You must have oil in your lamps. Study and patient labor are indispensable even to genius."

This study of the Bible, under Professor Stowe and by himself, and especially during his last term at the Seminary while he was in charge of the Bible class, was really

his salvation from the depression and condition of doubt into which he had been thrown by the theological combats just alluded to. For one of his brothers, surcharged with doubts, had thrown up the ministry (although he afterward returned to it again), and Henry Ward himself during the hot rage of pro-slavery rioting in Cincinnati and the great anti-slavery excitement in the seminary itself, had for some months been actively engaged in editing the *Cincinnati Journal*, by means of which his ideas and feelings were drawn to the possibility of his escaping the ministerial life and adopting journalism as his profession. That he would have been one of the country's great editors, no one can doubt; yet how much would have been lost to journalism itself, as well as to the cause of God and the up-building of man in the multitudinous avenues through which this man's influence has been felt, had he not been drawn as he was, by the inspiration imparted to him in the study of the Scriptures, to the founding of his whole professional life upon the broad basis of God's work in the world!

From this close and loving study he received two luminous thoughts. He speaks of the time,

"When it pleased God to reveal to my wandering soul the idea that it was *His nature to love a man in his sins for the sake of helping him out of them*; that he did not do it out of compliment to Christ, or to a 'law' or a 'plan of salvation,' but from the fullness of His great heart. . . . Time went on, and next came the disclosure of a *Christ ever present with me*—a Christ that never was far from me, but was always near me, as a companion and friend, to uphold and sustain me. This was the last and the best revelation of God's Spirit to my soul."

Of course it is not to be supposed that the inspiration of these great ideas had now been for the first time presented to young Beecher's mind, but simply this: his whole training and education thus far had been along the line of the Calvinistic theology, involving chiefly the idea of God's sovereignty and power. Aided by the controversies of the time, then beginning to break away from under the mighty shadow of that truth, controversies aiming to establish the theory of man's free agency and consequent responsibility,

and giving to human individuality a dignity which the older theology did not allow to it,—he was yet hampered and obstructed by the sense of argumentation; his heart, that tremendous engine of moral and spiritual power, was not satisfied. But, from the time when his soul was lifted up by these two great truths—*God's nature* as manifested by Jesus the Christ *to love man in his sins* for the sake of helping him out of them, and *the sustaining Christ ever present with individual men* ("a real presence" of perennial spiritual influence),—he sprang to his work with an ardor that was unquenched to the end of his life.

God's love because of his fatherhood; man's worth and mutual brotherhood because of his sonship to God: these were the two halves of the one great theme which from that time to the day of his final silence, underlay his life, his words, his works.

Indeed his own playful way of putting this is as apt as any could be: "I was like the man in the story, to whom the fairy gave a purse with a single piece of money in it, which he found always came again as soon as he had spent it. I thought I had found at least one thing to preach; I found it included everything."

With the close of his theological studies in 1837, young Beecher married Miss Eunice White Bullard, a sister of one of his classmates and a daughter of Dr. Bullard of Worcester, Mass. Their betrothal had lasted faithfully for seven years, and their faithful companionship in married life lasted for fifty years, his death in 1887 rounding the half century.

Here, then, concludes the first period of Henry Ward Beecher's life. We have tried to sketch—or rather to have him sketch—the inherited traits, the early influences, that combined to give him his outfit. He was not one whose education was finished when he left the theological seminary. To the day of his death he learned, he grew, he increased the talent committed to his charge; but on leaving the seminary he was armed and equipped, and inspired with the best thought of his life.

III.

TEN YEARS OF MISSIONARY WORK.

It is neither possible nor desirable in this place to give a biography of Mr. Beecher. The object sought is simply to gather some memoirs going to show the main sources of his power as an instructor of public thought and a stimulator of public feeling, the principles from which he drew his own inspiration, and the consistency with which he maintained them under whatever variations of the influences about him,—whether social, religious, ecclesiastical, or political.

He preached for a brief time in the Presbyterian Church in Covington, Kentucky, but soon received a call from Lawrenceburg, Indiana, a small town about twenty miles west of Cincinnati, where for two years he labored in his little low wooden building, which would seat one hundred and fifty people, the church membership consisting of twenty members,—as he puts it, “nineteen of them were women, and the other was nothing,”—he and his young wife living in two rooms over a provision store, with a salary of two hundred and fifty dollars guaranteed by the Home Missionary Society, and a possible one hundred and fifty more from the parish, paid if at all in provisions. Less than \$1.10 a day, if all was paid! When we read such figures as these and think of the self-denying labors and privations of those who labor for God and man in our frontier settlements, it seems clear that when, many years afterwards, Mr. Beecher was trying to arouse the manliness of the working-men to meet the rigors of hard times, and said that if all they could get was a dollar a day they

should make that suffice, he well knew what he was talking about.

Mr. Beecher's own pictures of these days of destitution are very graphic, but we cannot stop to consider them in detail; and yet these two years were among the most valuable of his training-time, bringing him face-to-face and hand-to-hand with the ills and miseries of actual privation and poverty as well as the hard pastoral work of a Home Missionary in a malarial district among a scattered people. He was blessed with health, vigor, perseverance, and already an intuitive way of getting at people's hearts.

He says:—

“There lived over on the other side of the street in Lawrenceburg, where first I had my settlement, a very profane man, who was counted ugly. I understood that he had said some very bitter things of me. I went right over to his store, and sat down on the counter to talk with him. I happened in often,—day in and day out. My errand was to make him like me. I did make him like me,—and all the children too; and when I left, two or three years later, it was his house that was opened to me and all my family for the week after I gave up my room. And to the day of his death I do not believe the old man could mention my name without crying.”

Thus it was that he learned early in his career the secret of winning the sympathies of the men whom he desired to influence. He relates in one place his visit to the manufacture of *papier maché* in Birmingham, England. He was noticing the various processes from room to room, until, coming to where they give the final polish, he was told that they had tried everything in the world for polishing and at last had been convinced that there was no leather or other substance that had such power to polish to the very finest smoothness, as the living leather in its vital state,—the human hand. “It is very much so,” says he, “with people. You can teach them from the pulpit in certain large ways, but there are some things you cannot do except by putting your very hand upon them.”

During these two years young Beecher made his mark not only in the little community where he was working

but also in Cincinnati, where he occasionally preached in his father's pulpit, at the Second Presbyterian Church. In 1839 he was called to Indianapolis, then a place of about four thousand inhabitants, the capital of the State. The "new school" and "old school" theological discussions were still disturbing the churches (as when indeed are they not!) and he was called to a new congregation which had swarmed off from their more conservative brethren. He had now a larger salary (\$600—say \$1.65 per diem) but also larger expenses, and was compelled still, although not suffering from positive poverty, to exercise rigid economy and live in great simplicity.

As to preaching, he had, as we have seen, had considerable experience. He had practiced public speaking from the time of his Sophomore year at college,—making temperance speeches, holding conference meetings, and in various ways learning to overcome his natural diffidence and acquiring power to face people and to think on his feet. In the little Lawrenceburg church he had preached the best sermons that he knew how to get up, but was constantly discouraged with his own efforts. He says: "I remember distinctly that every Sunday night I had a headache. I went to bed every Sunday night with a vow registered that I would buy a farm and quit the ministry."

But while thus slowly feeling his way toward the power of setting forth truth in a way to lay hold on the minds of men, he was diligently filling up his own mind. He says:—

"I read Robert South, through and through; I saturated myself with South. I formed much of my style and my handling of texts on his methods. I obtained a vast amount of instruction and assistance from others of those old sermonizers, who were as familiar to me as my own name. I read Barrow, Howe, Sherlock, Butler, and Edwards particularly. I preached a great many sermons while reading these old men, and upon their discourses I often founded the framework of my own. After I had preached them I said to myself, 'That will never do; I wouldn't preach that again for the world;' but I was learning, and nobody ever tripped me up."

In fact he learned slowly, in spite of his father's power as a preacher and an effective mover of men, and of his own facility and popularity as a speaker. He himself tells us, "For the first three years of my ministry I did not make a single sinner wink." He was gaining in reputation, but that was not what he was aiming at; and it was not until the beginning of a period of intense religious excitement, which indeed grew largely out of his own efforts, that at last he seems to have come to something of the power which so largely abode with him from that time forward. More and more constantly did he study the life and the teachings of Him who spoke as never man spake, earnestly seeking the secret by means of which it was that the common people heard Him gladly. He also gave zealous study to the doings and sayings of those first Christian missionaries, the apostles, and both while at Lawrenceburg and in the first portion of his Indianapolis pastorate, he did much to furnish himself with the best of material and the best of models for his work. He says:—

"I owe more to the Book of Acts and the writings of the Apostle Paul than to all other books put together. I was sent into the wilderness of Indiana to preach among the poor and ignorant, and I lived in my saddle. My library was in my saddlebags; I went from camp-meeting to camp-meeting, and from log hut to log hut. I took my New Testament, and from it I got that which has been the very secret of any success that I have had in the Christian ministry."

And again:—

"When I had lived at Indianapolis the first year, I said, 'There was a reason why when the apostles preached they succeeded, and I will find it out if it is to be found out.' I took every single instance in the record where I could find one of their sermons, and analyzed it, and asked myself, 'What were their circumstances? Who were the people? What did he do?' And I studied the sermons until I got this idea: that the apostles were accustomed first to feel for a ground on which the people and they stood together; a common ground where they could meet. Then they stored up a large number of the particulars of knowledge that belonged to everybody; and when they had got that knowledge which everybody would admit placed in a proper form be-

fore the minds of the people, then they brought it to bear upon them with all their excited heart and feeling. That was the first definite idea of *taking aim* that I had in my mind. 'Now,' said I, 'I will make a sermon so.' I remember it just as well as if it were yesterday. First, I sketched out the things we all know, . . . and in that way I went on with my 'you all knows,' until I had about forty of them. When I had got through that, I turned round and brought it to bear upon them with all my might; and there were seventeen men awakened under that sermon. I never felt so triumphant in my life. I cried all the way home. I said to myself, 'Now I know how to preach.' I could not make another sermon for a month that was good for anything. I had used all my powder and shot on that one. But, for the first time in my life, I had got the idea of *taking aim*. I soon added to it the idea of analyzing the people I was preaching to, and so taking aim for specialties. Of course that came gradually and later, with growing knowledge and experience."

And again:—

"It is easier to study law and become a successful practitioner, it is easier to study medicine and become a successful practitioner, than it is to study the human soul all through—to know its living forms, and to know the way of talking to it and coming into sympathy with it."

We have seen (p. 24) how he had learned the lesson of thoroughness, in the preparation for his "Lectures to Young Men." At the time of his Indianapolis pastorate, the assembling in that city of the State Legislature brought together a great many people of all kinds, and as the chief city of the State it was naturally alive not only with good influences, but also with bad, and at one time vice seemed to fairly riot there. Gambling and drinking and all forms of evil flourished rankly. Seeing here an opportunity, young Beecher prepared himself by a careful study of facts, and then delivered that series of lectures which when gathered and published (as most of his early books were, for the pecuniary benefit of other people), formed his first book. The venerable Dr. Leonard Bacon, contemporary and friend of the older Beecher, wrote:—

"I remember admiring its force of thought and inspiration, its wealth of illustration, its insight into human nature under the various phases of individual character, its boldness of assault and

denunciation, its earnestness in warning young men against moral dangers, and the electric force of its incitements to manly aspirations and manly living. In every lecture I seemed to see sparks as from the red-hot iron on the old anvil, and to hear the old Boanerges thundering with a youthful voice."

These lectures produced an intense excitement in the community. Many men of high social and political standing felt themselves aimed at, and were wrathful; but the city thronged to hear them, consciences were aroused, perceptions enlightened, hearts touched, and the result was a revival of religion that shook the community. This plain presentation of simple truth with a bold hand, set forth in dramatic forms, followed up by moral instruction and spiritual incitement, really struck the key-note of the man's life and labor.

But it was not only boldness that he learned, but deftness also was coming to his modes of management.

When he was at Indianapolis, he says:—

"Nobody was allowed to say a word on the subject of slavery. They were all red-hot out there then; and one of my elders said, 'If an Abolitionist comes here I will head a mob to put him down.' I was a young preacher. I had some pluck; I felt, and it grew in me, that that was a subject that ought to be preached upon. . . . The question was, how shall I do it? I recollect one of the earliest efforts I made in that direction was in a sermon on some general topic. It was necessary to illustrate a point, and I did it by picturing a father ransoming his son from captivity among the Algerines, and glorying in his love of liberty and his fight against bondage. They all thought I was going to apply it to slavery; but I did not, I applied it to my subject and it passed off: and they all drew a long breath. It was not long before I had another illustration from that quarter, and so, before I had been there a year, I had gone all over the sore spots of slavery, in illustrating the subject of Christian experience and doctrine. It broke the ice."

The above passage occurs in his instructions to young preachers on the subject of Illustrations, and it seems worth while to include another paragraph pursuing the same topic:—

"You may go down to the brook under the willows and angle for the trout that everybody has been trying to catch, but in vain.

You go splashing and tearing along, throwing in your line, pole and all. Do you think you can catch them that way? No, indeed; you must begin afar off and quietly, if need be drawing yourself along on the grass and perhaps even on your belly, until you come where through the quivering leaves you see the flash of the sun; and then slowly and gently you throw your line so that the fly on its end falls as light as a gossamer upon the placid surface of the brook. The trout will think 'That is not a bait thrown to catch me: there is nobody there,' and rises to the fly, takes it,—and you take him."

He earnestly strove both in spirit of life and in method of labor to follow Jesus, that he might be made a *fisher of men*.

Perhaps one of the most fruitful fields of the infinite variety of illustrations used by Mr. Beecher throughout his life was his love for nature, his profound and extensive knowledge of its processes and productions, his appreciation of its myriad forms and sounds of beauty, the sentiments which it is capable of arousing in the human soul, and the multiform similitudes which it offers to the conditions and development of human life. His facile control of this vast field of course did not come by accident. He always loved and sympathized with the life of the natural world from his earliest childhood, and much of his boyhood and youth was spent in the meadows and along the brooks and among the woods. The cultivation of flowers and shrubs and of all manner of vegetables had been his delight in youth and his necessity when life-work began. During his two years at Mount Pleasant Academy, while preparing for college, he had found a sympathetic instructor in an old gardener, who taught him much, and he had never been without a vital and practical interest in those matters. In his preface to the first edition of "Pleasant Talk about Fruits, Flowers, and Farming," a collection of his articles from the *Western Farmer and Gardener*, which he edited while he was in Indianapolis (by way of resting from his pulpit labors), he says:—

"It may be of some service to the young as showing how valuable the fragments of time may become, if mention is made of the way in which we became prepared to edit this journal. The

continued taxation of daily preaching, extending through months, and once through eighteen consecutive months without the exception of a single day, began to wear upon our nerves, and made it necessary for us to seek some relaxation. Accordingly we used, after each week-night's preaching, to drive the sermon out of our heads by some alternative reading.

"In the State Library were Loudon's works—his encyclopedias of Horticulture, of Agriculture, and of Architecture. We fell upon them, and, for years, almost monopolized them. In our little one-story cottage, after the day's work was done, we pored over these monuments of an almost incredible industry, and read, we suppose, not only every line, but much of it many times over. . . . In this way, through several years, we gradually accumulated materials and became familiar with facts and principles, which paved the way for our editorial labors. 'Lindley's Horticulture' and 'Gray's Structural Botany' came in as constant companions. And when, at length, through a friend's liberality we became the recipients of the London *Gardener's Chronicle*, edited by Professor Lindley, our treasures were inestimable. Many hundred times have we lain awake for hours, unable to throw off the excitement of preaching, beguiling the time with imaginary visits to the Chiswick Garden, and to the more than Oriental magnificence of the Duke of Devonshire's grounds at Chatsworth. We have had long discussions, in that little bedroom at Indianapolis, with Van Mons about pears, with Vibert about roses, with Thompson and Knight about everything under the heavens in the horticultural world.

"This employment of waste hours not only answered a purpose of soothing excited nerves then, but brought us into such relations to the material world, that we speak with entire moderation when we say that all the estates of the richest duke in England could not have given us half the pleasure which we derived from pastures, waysides, and unoccupied prairies."

There was probably no one feature of Mr. Beecher's writing or speaking upon any topic whatsoever, so noticeable as his accurate and apparently intuitive knowledge of the natural world. But his knowledge was worked for; the wonder was his power of assimilation. "Natural genius," he says, "is but the soil, which, let alone runs to weeds. If it is to bear fruit and harvest worth the reaping, it must be plowed and tilled with incessant care." And again: "Though a man be born to genius, a natural

reader and a natural reasoner, these endowments give him but the outlines of himself, and filling up means incessant, painstaking study and work. . . . It may be impassioned, facile, and fruitful, remunerating him as it goes on; nevertheless, there must be incessant work. Work may be light, unburdensome, as full of song as the merry brook that turns the miller's wheel; but no wheel is ever turned without the rush and weight of the stream upon it."

And yet again: "No man can preach well except out of an abundance of well-wrought material. Some sermons seem to start up suddenly, soul and body; but no, they are the product of years of experience. . . . It is only the form, like the occasion, that is extemporaneous. No man preaches except out of the stores that have been gathered in him."

And now, by way of rounding up the period of his Western ministry,—the two years at Lawrenceburg and the eight at Indianapolis,—let us make one more quotation illustrative of his power of adapting truth to circumstances; showing his growth in the art of maintaining principles which should be consistent in themselves, while presenting different fronts to different winds:—

"When my ministry was in the West, what did I find? A loose and heterogeneous mass of men who had come from everywhere,—the detritus from the stream of immigration. As at the delta of the Mississippi is gathered refuse which floats down from the region above, so in the West were gathered human beings from almost every nation on the globe; and there the principle of individualism was the predominant one. I insisted upon the sanctity of the Sabbath day; I insisted upon the absolute necessity of churches and church forms; and I insisted upon the indispensableness of authority and of obedience to that authority. I preached every Sunday against individualism, and in favor of association. By and by I was transferred to the East; and there I found society hard-ribbed, vigorous. Men were lopped off on every side to make them fit into crowded populations. Society was tyrannical. And ever since I came East I have fought society, and tried to get individual men to be free, independent, and large. I was right both times. I did not care for abstract theories. My object was to get *men*. . . . Now if I had to study the propor-

tions of a philosophy, I should probably study in such a way that I would save my philosophy but lose my men. . . . Who cries for symmetry in *medicine*? Symmetry in *health* is what we want."

Mr. Beecher's Western life was full of distresses and discomforts, but glowing with conscious advancement in inner life and in outward success in his calling. He said during a visit to Indianapolis in 1876: "I went to Indianapolis in the fall of 1839 with a little sick babe in my arms which showed the first symptoms of recovery after eating blackberries which I gathered by the way. The city had then a population of four thousand [now, in 1887, one hundred and fifty thousand]. With the exception of two or three streets there were no ways along which could not be seen the original stumps of the forest; I have bumped against them in a buggy too often not to be well assured of the fact. Here I preached my first *real* sermon; here, for the first time I strove against death in behalf of a child, and was defeated; here I built a house and painted it with my own hands; here I had my first garden, and became the bishop of flowers for this diocese; here I first joined the editorial fraternity, and edited the *Farmer and Gardener*; here I had my first taste of chills and fever; here for the first time, I waded to church ankle-deep in mud and preached with pantaloons tucked into my boot-tops. . . . It is now a mighty city, full of foundries, manufactories, wholesale stores, and with a magnificent courthouse, beautiful dwellings, noble churches, wide and fine streets, and railroads more than I could mention, radiating to every point of the compass." He alludes in another passage to "the days of sickness, chills and fever, the gardening days, my first editorial experience, my luck in horses and pigs, my house-building, and not a few scrapes; being stalled in the mud, half drowned in crossing rivers, long, lonely forest rides, camp meetings, preachings in camps, sleepings in the open air."

If the physical aspects of these days were dark to the sturdy, vigorous, elastic preacher, to his young wife,—nurtured in the serenity of a New England town, accustomed to the conveniences and pleasant industries of a

New England home,—this being plunged into the rudenesses of an almost frontier life and the drain both physical and mental of a rapidly increasing family of little children, was darkness almost unrelieved. Her health failed, her spirits were depressed, and her condition was a source of the keenest anxiety to the loving husband. The spring of 1847, therefore, found young Beecher in a very uncertain state of mind. Vital and springy in bodily condition; mentally active, intense, out-reaching, greedily acquiring and prodigally pouring forth the treasures accessible to him; encouraged, stimulated, conscious of growing power, and having a heart aflame with zeal for Christ and love for man,—he was, on the other hand, weighted with wearing anxiety for his dear wife, worrying about his children and home, and—even in intellectual matters—while craving books and art and music and the means of a wider and finer culture, he was cabined, cribbed, confined, by his own poverty and the scanty resources of the community in which he lived. So that all causes combined to make it a glad thing for him to receive, as he did at that time, an invitation to go East with his wife to attend what was then known as “Anniversary Week,” in New York City, and to deliver one of the addresses before the Home Missionary Society.

As it seemed then, it was in itself the great event of his life; as we see it now, it was in itself a very small affair, except as being the initiative step of his real career.

IV.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH: PERSONAL TRAITS.

CONGREGATIONALISM, as a denomination, had down to 1840 made but small progress outside of New England. A movement for its extension began very actively about that time. One of the very earliest efforts of that activity was the founding of the Church of the Pilgrims in the city of Brooklyn in 1844. Shortly after its successful inauguration, some of its members determined to start another Congregational church and proceeded actively to accomplish that, by purchasing the building of the Old First Presbyterian Church, then just vacated for a new one. The first services were held on Sunday, May 16, 1847.

Mr. Beecher, who had met with a welcome at the Anniversary meetings in New York largely on account of his father and elder brothers, had made a marked impression there by his own addresses. Mr. William P. Cutter, of New York, who had known and admired him in the West, had already mentioned him to the gentlemen who had initiated the new church project; and the young preacher was invited to be present at the opening services of the church and preach the first sermons, which he did with marked acceptability, morning and evening. The church was organized on Sunday, June 13, with twenty-one members. The wife of one of the promoters had suggested "Plymouth Brethren" as a name, and "Plymouth Church" was the title adopted. Young Beecher, who had gone on to Boston after his first preaching, returned a few weeks later and preached again, for two successive Sundays; the consequence being that on June 14, 1847, he was

unanimously invited by the church and society to become their pastor. With many misgivings as to the wisdom of leaving his Presbyterian associations and his well-loved parish in the West, Mr. Beecher was influenced primarily by the evident improvement in his wife's health and also by the marked heartiness and earnestness and activity of the people who had called him to work with them, and decided to accept the invitation; preferring it to a position offered him with the old Park Street Church in Boston (where his father and his brother Edward had preceded him), because in Plymouth he should be able to begin the work in his own way. From that day, during the forty years which intervened until his death, his history and that of Plymouth Church are one and the same. They are known to all men in America, and throughout the English-speaking world more widely than those of any other man or church in Christendom. It will not therefore be necessary to do more than touch upon a few salient points; and those, as bearing upon his personality and methods of working.

When in October, 1847, Henry Ward Beecher assumed the pastorate of Plymouth Church, he was thirty-four years and four months old. His compact, vigorous figure, five feet nine inches in height; his long dark hair; broad brow; large blue eyes,—now luminous with intensity, now twinkling with merriment; rather large, straight nose; peculiarly well formed mouth, mobile with feeling; ruddy complexion; and a garb decidedly unclerical, presented an unusual appearance.

The first thing he did was to have the pulpit cut away, and upon the broad platform was set a rather low mahogany desk, open beneath. He had the natural instinct of the orator, and felt that for him to get at his listeners the listeners must be able to see the speaker. Throughout his whole career it is rather remarkable that one so apparently careless of appearances should have been, as this man was, uniformly successful in doing the right thing so far as concerned all physical carriage in his public appearances. His instincts were those of a gentleman, and whenever he shocked the sense of propriety of church-

goers (as he occasionally did), it was never by any ungainliness or impropriety of action, but always by some sudden and unexpected turn of thought, of a kind to which people were unaccustomed in Sunday services. Yet, even so, those little shocks to their conventional nerves invariably resulted in arousing attention and fixing the listeners' mind upon the thought to be presented. They were sometimes the unconscious results of his original way of looking at things, and sometimes the intentional arts of the orator, who sought not to exhibit himself as a model clergyman but to "catch men."

To show the underlying reason why he took his stand upon a platform rather than in the pulpit, read this little passage from his "Lectures on Preaching:"—

"It is not necessary that a man, because he may not be able to stand like the statue of Apollo, should stand ungracefully. He loses, unconsciously, a certain power; for, although he does not need a very fine physical figure (which is rather a hindrance, I think), yet he should be pleasing in his bearing and gestures. A man who is very beautiful and superlatively graceful sets people to admiring him; they make a kind of monkey god of him, and it stands in the way of his usefulness. From this temptation most of us have been mercifully delivered. On the other hand, what we call naturalness, fitness, good taste, and propriety are to be sought. You like to see a man come into your parlor with, at least, ordinary good manners and some sense of propriety, and what you require in your parlor you certainly have a right to expect in church. One of the reasons why I condemn these churns called pulpits is that they teach a man bad habits; he is heedless of his posture and learns bad tricks behind these bulwarks. He thinks that people will not see them. So with gestures. There are certain people who will never make many gestures, but they should see to it that what they do make shall be graceful and appropriate. There are others who are impulsive, and so full of feeling that they throw it out in every direction, and it is, therefore, all the more important that their action shall be shorn of awkwardness and constrained mannerism. Now and then a man is absolutely dramatic, as, for instance, John B. Gough, who could not speak otherwise. It is unconscious with him. It is inherent in all natural orators; they put themselves at once, unconsciously, in sympathy with the things they are describing."

We shall return to this matter again when considering Mr. Beecher's oratory, but meanwhile, it is significant of what his life and work among the people had done for him during the ten years of missionary labor in the West, that his first act when he found himself raised to an Eastern pulpit was to get out of it nearer to his hearers.

He had accepted the responsibility of a position in the city already called the "City of Churches," itself well furnished with clergymen of ability and repute, and practically a part of that greater city, its near neighbor across the East River. As to comparing himself with others or worrying about his new and untried field, these unnecessary girdings were entirely foreign to his nature. He worked for the love of working; the grinding sense of responsibility he felt to be uncongenial to the faith and trust of a Christian life. He refused to entertain anxieties, but put in all the forces he possessed as a farmer puts in his labor and his seed; and he left the germination, like the sunshine and the rain, to the providence of God. He says in one place: "In general I have never performed my work but once; whereas many others perform theirs three times,—first by anticipation; then in realization; and afterward by rumination."

He began as he afterward continued, and his own description of it will be the best. He says:—

"I have often been asked by what secret I retain health and vigor under labors multiform and continuous. I owe much to a good constitution inherited from my parents, not spoiled by youthful excesses or weakened by over-study; much also to an early-acquired knowledge of how to take care of myself, to secure invariably a full measure of sleep, to regard food as an engineer does fuel (to be employed economically, and entirely with reference to the work to be done by the machine); much to the habit of economizing social forces, and not wasting in needless conversation and pleasurable hilarities the spirit that would carry me through many days of necessary work; but, above all, to the possession of a hopeful disposition and natural courage, to sympathy with men, and to an unfailing trust in God; so that I have always worked for the love of working."

With these interior impulses, and wise powers of guidance and restraint; with a mind well stored by years of studious reading and thinking; with ten years' growth in the experience of working directly upon the souls of men, and an original aptitude in the "art of putting things" by which he had already grown facile and expert, it is not to be wondered at that this man found himself instantly at home in the turmoil of the great cities where thronged the very game he was after—*men*. Lovers of the conventional complained that he was not smooth, he lacked polish; which perhaps was not without a certain amount of truth, for he took hold like a new file. Not only individual men, but the community at large, very soon felt that there was a fresh and unusual kind of force at work.

The old church building was cramped and packed with the throngs, and when after a few months it took fire and was badly damaged, the people of the church saw that it was their opportunity not to rebuild the old, but to build anew; and they reared the great broad-shouldered amplitude of Plymouth Church as it stands to-day.

True to his intention of getting at the people, Mr. Beecher had the organ, with space for a large volunteer choir, set at the back of the platform, in front of the audience, thus thrusting the speaker well forward into the midst of the throng. He did away with the broad middle aisle, and filled that cold, blank space with people. The pews were arranged, so far as possible, in circling fashion about the platform. The galleries were about twice the ordinary depth, and the seating capacity of the house about twenty-seven hundred, although with the hinged aisle-seats which they were soon compelled to add, the congregation usually numbered about three thousand. Not a dollar was spent upon unnecessary ornament, but everything was plain and simple, the main object being to have a well-lighted, well-ventilated, commodious audience-room, of good acoustic properties, arranged to seat the people with their faces convergent toward the platform, and, with the great choir before them, forming a natural social circle

in which it would be easy to focalize thought and feeling, whether for instruction, prayer, or praise.

Mr. Beecher recognized the danger of bareness and leanness which always hangs over the non-liturgical churches. The Roman service, and to a great extent the Episcopal service, touch the devout imagination, reaching toward if not actually inspiring veneration and awe, and seeking for chords whose response is worship; and he felt that the characteristic fault of the plainer church services was their preponderance of instruction and lack of provision for the element of worship. This he proposed to supply, and with a very grand success did supply, by means of music, and especially by means of so interesting the entire audience that it should not only listen and be played upon, but should also take part. He was, in fact, together with that noble old organist, John Zundel, the pioneer of congregational singing in America.

It was not until 1855 that he succeeded in getting his "Plymouth Collection of Hymns and Tunes" published, and the people all furnished with words and music so as to make Plymouth congregational singing the fine art that it became shortly after that; and yet, from the very beginning, with a large voluntary choir and a persistent urging upon the congregation that they should take hold, and the use of tunes that everybody knew, he did succeed in bringing in that powerful aid,—that "provision for the esthetic feeling, the fancy and the imagination and the more facile emotions, which is not provided for by any framework furnished to the preacher, and which, according to his various abilities and endowments or moods, circumstances may or may not have partially provided for in him."

In his instructions ("Yale Lectures on Preaching") on the relations of music to worship, he goes very carefully and suggestively into the function of the organ both in opening voluntaries and interludes and in hymn accompaniments and closing voluntaries.

And speaking of John Zundel, he says: "To make music to him means worship and the organ means religion. . . . So long had he been trained, that what words

are to us, notes were to him; and he expressed every thought and feeling that he had, upon the instrument. In his inspired moments upon the organ, it has brought tears to my eyes a hundred times; I have gone in jaded and unheartened, and have been caught up by him and lifted so that I saw the flash of the gates. I have been comforted, I have been helped, and if I have preached to him and helped him,—and I know I have,—he has preached to me and helped me; and he knows not and never will know how much.”

Mr. Beecher then gives his ideas of the choir and of congregational singing and of the choice of hymns on the principle of co-operation with the mood of thought or feeling into which he wishes to bring his auditors; which show the keenest susceptibility to the power of music in himself and the quickest sympathy and intuitive knowledge of its effect upon a gathering of persons brought together for a purpose, and a remarkable capacity for philosophizing upon the facts thus gained from experience and observation, with a facility for reducing them to a systematic practice for subserving his own aims. Nor does he make any cast-iron system, but in accordance with what more and more appears to have been the plan of his whole life, he deduces vital principles which must receive varied application according to varying circumstances.

It was a common remark in those days that, whereas the average church congregation was made up in the proportion of five women to one man, in Plymouth Church the proportion ran the other way. Men sought him because he was strong and helped them, but women and little children no less were attracted by his winning qualities. The church flourished; it grew strong; it multiplied rapidly; its Sunday-school was thronged; it began mission work in the city, and in all practical ways offered prompt evidence of the genuine value of the Christian inspiration it received, by giving as bountifully as it had received. Strangers quickly learned to seek it out; and in its proper work as a Christian church, it soon entered upon a vigorous activity.

Basing his philosophy and his practical methods of

attracting men to a higher life rather upon the facts of human nature, the teachings of Jesus, and the working methods of the Apostles, than upon the skillfully devised theological systems of the schools (not because he was unfamiliar with the latter, but, because, knowing them so well, he thought them less likely to be useful than the methods of the earlier day) he naturally gained friends faster among the common people who heard him gladly than he did among the professional members of the priesthood and conservators of the traditions of the elders.

And yet, even among those he found many firm and constant friends. The broad foundation on which he stood made him broadly liberal toward all beliefs which accepted Christ and successfully labored to make men Christ-like. Indomitable in the assertion of his own beliefs, he was no less vigorous in maintaining the rights of others to theirs. One of his most characteristic sermons is entitled "Other Men's Consciences." His church received into its communion members from all the Christian sects, who found there a common ground on which to stand and to work. This commingling of elements gave him a body of men and women knit together by the profoundest sympathy in a simple faith and by an ardent love for the man who had released them from the bonds of petty sectarianism, and opened to them the larger liberty of Christian manhood.

Among the most potent influences which Mr. Beecher immediately developed in his new and peculiar church-membership, was the social element. The strength of associated hearts and wills and minds upon a common object, the play of mutual sympathy, the possibility of consentaneous purpose, was an element of human nature upon which he counted much and with which he accomplished much. With the profoundest belief in the immanence of God throughout all nature, including the spirit of man,—indeed, in the direct influence of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men, he was yet a sturdy believer in the necessity of bringing about all effects through natural causes.

"The gifts of the Divine Spirit," he says, "are not exceptional, or capricious, without rule, without definite purpose; but they are to be just as definitely expected as the results which the farmer seeks when he sows his seed. . . . In regard to the whole department of spiritual experiences, I say they are in analogy with mental experiences; not that they are on the same level, but that the administration of God over the human soul is in analogy with his administration over the lower or physical elements in man, and the intermediate emotions of the social and the intellectual processes. Spiritual developments are, all of them, under law, administered by law, as much as any other part of nature, and to be studied therefore as we study every other part of human life. And in regard to the moral elements, all the graces of the Spirit, and all the fruits of the Spirit are to be developed by education just as much as any other part of the mind. . . . That we perfect man's physical and intellectual nature by education, every one knows. . . . but when we come to religion, men fly the track. They seem to think, 'Here is vagueness; here is a realm too sacred to suppose that law operates in it.' And it is just there that I say, in respect emphatically to revivals of religion, that they are conformable to law, and that that conformableness to law lies in the foundation of knowledge and education, in the production of emotion, and in the production and conduct of all spiritual processes. . . . It is such statements that many feel to be an upheaval of the foundations and a departure from the faith of the fathers. 'Does not such a view as this confound Nature and Grace? Is it not bringing all gracious operations down to the level of nature?' What is nature, then? . . . Everything that God ever organized into being or maintained is nature. . . . Wherever, along the lines of space, the word of God has thrilled and something has happened, there is nature; and nothing is or can be, that does not circle into that. To reduce things 'to the level of nature,' then, is to reduce them to the level of God,—which ought not to be a very great degradation!"

In this very same lecture, in which Mr. Beecher was insisting upon the necessity of using proper means for the bringing about of spiritual, as well as physical, intellectual, and moral effects, he was asked by one of the students:—

"Would it not be consistent with your view to hold that prayer is more essential to the production of a revival than it is essential to the product of effects in farming?"

Answer:—

“Certainly. That is to say, prayer is more nearly related to the result you want to produce. Guano is better for farming than prayer, but prayer is the guano of spiritual life. Pray always. The praying always means that the thought, the feeling, the taste, the sense of pleasure, the social gladness, all the while effervesce, so that they take the upward tendency, they report themselves continually through the higher feelings towards God; and that I suppose to be prayer,—communion, God with us.”

With these rather uncommonly sensible views, which on the one hand may be called scientific, but which on the other hand were inspired by the profoundest trust in God's fatherly interest, and in the uniformity of the operations of the Divine Power so that its laws are discoverable, Mr. Beecher made much of the prayer-meetings.

The sense of God's fatherhood and of the naturalness of approach to him, was most characteristic of his entire life and work.

And this same atmosphere of the *naturalness of the spiritual life* permeated and enveloped his every activity in private and in public. It was what made his prayer-meetings unique in all Christendom. The simple, hearty, effective singing of the throng of seven or eight hundred people, led compactly and yet sympathetically by a piano played with a clear, firm touch; the informal, cordial, friendly, joyous way in which he taught his people to come into these meetings—at once the cause and the effect of the sense of *fellowship*; the singularly intelligible, natural, effective way in which Mr. Beecher always read the Bible—utterly avoiding the professional “holy tone” but developing the spirit and meaning of the passage (whether simply narrative, or dramatic, or devotional, or instructive, or hortative) precisely as he would have done a passage from any other book, led people into an interest before they knew it. Then, the frank, familiar style in which he would state the generic truth to be found in the Scriptural passage,—sitting meanwhile pleasantly in his chair, as rather in social converse than in formal discourse,—bringing the generic into the specific and multitudinous with ready

illustration; the way in which he developed the gifts of the different members by calling them out on some personal point of explanation, or making rapid and familiar interplay of question and answer; the patience and tact he showed with the inevitable bores; the variety he managed to infuse from week to week,—all these things made his prayer-meeting a power in the church itself, and a constant attraction to outsiders.

In getting at the influences brought to bear upon Plymouth Church, which made it what it was, it is necessary to mention the frequent revivals of religion which took place during the early years. Mr. Beecher's philosophy of these occasional impulses, as already stated, was that they were dependent upon regular laws, and yet that there are favoring circumstances which determine times and seasons. All methods are not alike wise, neither are all seasons alike propitious.

"Among hundreds of revivals," he says, "I have known only one that occurred in the midst of harvest; because men cannot spare the time from the harvest field. . . . Business has much to do with times and seasons. For instance, sometimes men are hot with speculation, and the whole air is full of it. That is not a favorable time for any processes leading toward this production of common moral feeling. . . . As you adapt all the economies of industry to the varying seasons, so you are to adapt your moral culture of men to those peculiarities of God's providence, which, with a little care and observation, every one may discern. . . . It is not every man that plows well and sows well, who gets his harvest; but still, that is the average course of things, and the probability is such as to encourage everybody."

And again:—

"We have occasion to bless God for these outpourings of the Spirit, that come as the wind comes, we know not always whence, and that go as the wind goes, we know not always whither, but which, like the wind in the mariner's sail, may be so studied and so used that there shall be over it a substantial control."

Mr. Beecher entered with zeal upon all these modes of fertilizing his church, of calling into action its latent forces, and of utilizing the forces so developed not only for the

purpose of enlarging the numerical strength of the new organization, but also of making it active in work, of making it felt as a force for good in the community at large. His wisely directed power was astonishingly successful in effects.

Between 1847 and 1856 was a period when men's minds were seething and fermenting. The excitement ran largely along the lines of temperance agitation, and the growth of the anti-slavery sentiment as a moral political force.

None felt more profoundly than he the working of that reform-leaven. He knew intuitively that he was set at a focal point. Finding himself in the midst of the intensest commercial activities of the country, being essentially a part of New York, although not within its civic boundaries; seeing that the throngs who came week after week to his Sunday preachings, and Wednesday evening lectures, and Friday evening prayer-meetings, were very largely composed of active business men, a great proportion of whom were between twenty-five and forty years of age, and recognizing that as his church grew and consolidated it was made up of much of this same element, he seems to have laid out for himself then the general course that he consistently pursued to the end. Not that he was gifted with preternatural foresight of what the years were to bring forth, but that he had the sensitive temperament which brings subtle knowledge of atmospheric disturbance. And in this case it was a disturbance which aroused his whole nature to preparations for the coming storm. In every aspect of the reform questions of the day, which on all sides were dividing men's sympathies and opinions, splitting organizations, overturning established forms, he saw not so much the superficial effects, as the underlying causes. To him, political parties, Bible and Tract Societies, Missionary Boards, Christian sects and churches, were always means and not ends. Just as he turned away in disgust from theological quarrels which in the name of God and things holy he had frequently seen to degenerate into the most scandalous personal enmities, so too, he looked at all the organized instrumentalities of moral and religious instruc-

tion among men, valuing them not for what they were called, but for what they could do, and turned away from them as valueless when they became the subjects of violent controversy and bitter dissension instead of being instruments for good. He judged men and institutions according to that simple but searching test given by Jesus, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

"When they said to me, 'You are not orthodox,' I replied, 'Very well, be it so; I am out on other business: I understand that call that has been sounding down through two thousand years, and I will obey it: Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.'

"What about 'original sin'? There has been so much actual transgression that I have not had time to go back on to that."

It was thus his practical manner of applying broad generic principles to every present condition of human life that made his genius effective.

And the first thing that he did to prepare for the great conflict that had already begun and that was more and more extending itself amid the various organizations of the country, was to collect and to inspire with enthusiasm for the fatherly God and the brotherly Saviour and the needy human brotherhood, a body of men and women who became a great center of power along those essential practical lines. And as in regard to all other organizations, so in regard to Plymouth Church: while it was the thing he loved best, yet it was always with him but a means to the one great aim of his life. He did not set himself to the purpose of making a "prominent church," but, recognizing the great opportunity for effective work, he leaped eagerly into the field and gathered his forces together.

There can be little doubt that his main and indeed only thought in all his wise and earnest labors in Plymouth Church in those early days, was his strong desire to "catch men," yet every fiber of his being was a-tingle with the electric conditions of the time. He says:—*

*Address before the London Congregational Board, Sept. 28, 1886; from "A Summer in England with H. W. Beecher" (1887).

"I came insensibly into connection with public questions; I was sucked into the political controversies and the moral reformations of the age; and, just at that time, that question was coming up which involved every principle of rectitude, of morality, of humanity, and of religion. My father was too old; the controversy came on when he was failing; he was cautious in his way; he was afraid that his son Henry would get himself into difficulties. But I took no counsel with man. When I came to Brooklyn, some dear men who are now at rest said, with the best intention, 'You have a blessed chance, and you can come to very good influence if you do not throw yourself away;' and then warned me not to preach on slavery and on some other topics which at that time were up in the public mind. I do not know what it is in me—whether it is my father or my mother or both of them—but the moment you tell me that a thing that should be done is unpopular, I am right there, every time. I fed on the privilege of making men hear things, because I was a public speaker. I glorified in my gifts, not because they brought praise, for they brought the other thing continually; but men would come, and would hear, and I rejoiced in it. . . . Jesus knows that for his sake I smote with the sword and with the spear, not because I loved controversy, but because I loved truth and humanity; and because I saw weak men flinch, and because I saw base men truckle and bargain, and because I saw that the cause of Christ was likely to suffer: and I will fight to the end."

It will not be expected that this sketch can enter upon the details of Mr. Beecher's active life. His teachings were vital, and as he laid more stress upon the Christian art of right living than the theologic science of right dying, they penetrated with power into many a circle, and aroused torpidity to life. The elderly were startled and shocked; the young were electrified and stimulated; the mercantile community were stirred with both interest and anger at his bold expositions of commercial temptation and dishonest practice; respectable politicians were angered to find themselves openly coupled with those whom they despised but with whom they were yoked in practical politics.

Gifted with all his father's quick insight and genial humor and forceful aptitude in exposition, but freed from the theological partisanship which had been at once the

strength and the limitation of the elder man's career, Mr. Beecher had a fresh and original way of putting things, even when the underlying thought was a familiar one, which instantly arrested the attention of hearers or readers; for he very soon began to write as well as to speak to the public. It is not at all improbable that his singular lack of verbal memory, making it impossible down to the end of his life for him to quote anything except the briefest and most familiar passages of the Bible (and hardly those with accuracy) made many of his statements seem questionable simply because they were not arrayed in the phraseology to which the orthodox religious minds were accustomed. Looking at matters from the natural and reasonable, rather than from the ecclesiastical and theological side, he constantly availed himself of such truth as he thought he found in the old doctrines without putting them into the old language, and many earnest and excellent men and women who were drawn into his church and felt the stimulating power of his preaching, were yet in their hearts troubled, because they missed the old familiar and hackneyed phrases.

One of his earliest Brooklyn friends one day asked him: "Mr. Beecher, *do* you believe in the divinity of Christ?" With surprise he answered, "I know no other God." "Do you believe in the influence of the Holy Spirit?" "I believe," said he, "in the direct impact of God upon the human heart. Is it possible that you do not yet know a doctrine without its old-fashioned label tied to it?"

Such misunderstandings in his very flock make it less to be wondered at that his fellow-clergymen, who were soaked and steeped in theologic terms, often failed to catch the inner meaning of his talk because they missed the ancient shibboleth. Moreover, it was not long before those keen-sighted purveyors for the public taste and need—the journalists—lit upon the fact that the people were interested in Beecher, and they began to report him in the daily press. His own statement of the general result of this, as made in his address before the New York and Brooklyn Association of ministers and churches, in October, 1884,

while based upon the experience of many years, is yet an apt putting of the case as it was from the first:—

“You must bear in mind that great as is their usefulness—and I bear willing testimony to the great usefulness of the ubiquitous body of reporters—they are not all apostolic in theology, they are not Platos in philosophy, they are not all the most eminent disciples of the school of metaphysics, and they are set to do that which not one man of genius even in ten thousand can do—the rarest thing in the world—to put a discourse of one whole hour into a reading-space of five minutes. To do that is one of the supremest works of intellectual genius. But they are sent to the churches as well as to other meetings, and are expected to make a report that folks will read; so they catch here and they catch there shining passages, grotesque ones, or some that raise a little laughter. They go over to the office and the night editor says: ‘I want a quarter of a column of Beecher.’ ‘Well, but I have got a whole column.’ ‘Cut it down, cut it down.’ And they cut it here and they cut it there, and keep in things that they think will attract attention,—and that is the report of my sermon! Well, I do not blame them; but I tell you what I do blame. I blame the want of honor in ministers and editors who live within an hour’s walk or an hour’s postage of my house, and who could write to me and say, ‘I see in the papers this morning such and such things are reported as having been said by you. I wish to know whether that is a correct representation of your views.’ Not they! They sit down and write a long critique and send it to the *Congregationalist* or the *Advance* or somewhere else, based on my ‘views.’ If it is worth my while, and I turn around and say, ‘I was misrepresented; I didn’t say so;’ they will cry, ‘Oh, he is backing down as usual!’ So then, for more than twenty-five years, there is not a man on the globe that has been reported so much as I have been—in my private meetings, in my street conversations, on the platforms of public meetings, and steadily in the pulpit; a great many times admirably, many times less admirably, and sometimes abominably. This has been going on week after week, and year after year. Do you suppose I could follow up all misstatements and rectify them? . . . A man might run around like a kitten after its tail, all his life, if he were going around explaining all reports of his expressions and all the things he had written. Let them go. They will correct themselves. The average and general influence of a man’s teaching will be more mighty than any single misconception, or misapprehension through misconception.”

Thus it was that while he was constantly misapprehended, both in speech, in sentiment, and in general effect, by means of these fragmentary reportings of tongue and pen, nevertheless his influence constantly enlarged among those who had the opportunity or the sense to apprehend his meaning and follow the general trend of his teaching.

Many attempted analyses of Mr. Beecher's powers as orator and preacher have been made. Perhaps the best was that made by Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs in his Address at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration ("Silver Wedding") of Plymouth Church, in 1872. The following selected passages (*italics being ours*) give somewhat of his ideas:—

"The sources of that power in him, in which, during the last twenty-five years, you have been all the while rejoicing, are very deep and manifold. It used to amuse and provoke me, years ago, when men would speak as if his strength lay in some one thing; in his voice, perhaps, or in his gesture, or his power of illustration, or something else. Some single element, it was now and then thought, was the hair of this Samson, in which his strength resided; and if he were shorn of that he would become like other men. Nonsense! You know, as well as I do, that his power comes from many sources. It is like a rushing, royal river, which has its birthplace in a thousand springs. It is like a magnificent oak, which has its grand uplift of trunk and stem, and its vast sweep of branches, by reason of the multitudinous roots which strike down deep, and spread through the soil in every direction. These supply the mighty timbers of the battle-ship and the building!

"Now, if I were to go, as I shall not, into a thorough analysis of his power as a preacher, I should occupy your time for a great while; but there are certain elements of that power which are familiar to you, and which redound, not to his praise or yours, but to the praise of Him who made him what he is, and sent him thither.

"First among these elements, I should put a *thoroughly vitalized mind*; a mind so vitalized that its very process becomes as vital as himself; so that there is no reproduction of past processes; no memorizing of what has previously been in the mind. His creative faculties are in play all the time. . . .

"I think I should put second, *immense common sense*; a wonderfully self-rectifying judgment, which gives sobriety and sound-

ness to all his main processes of thought. I don't know but I have been more impressed by that in Mr. Beecher than by any other one element of strength in him. A man who has not common sense, this sound, self-rectifying judgment, on which the machinery of his mind is to work, flashes out very soon. . . .

"I should put next to this, I think, his quick and deep *sympathy with men*; his wonderful intuitive perception of moods of mind, which makes these stand out before him like a procession passing in the street. You say, 'This is genius.' Of course it is; but it is the genius, you observe, not of the dramatist nor of the poet; it is the genius of the great Preacher, who catches his suggestion, his inspirations even, from the eyes or the faces, shining or tearful, of the people before him.

"Then, still further, comes that *mental sensibility*, that emotional responsiveness, which has made him apt and ready for every occasion, that responsiveness which is called for in every minister, but which has been called upon in him more than any other man, perhaps, in the whole American pulpit, during the last twenty-five years. He has never been found wanting in readiness for the occasion, no matter what the subject may have been, or what the scene. His mind has been full of vigor, and has kindled spontaneously, by collision with persons, or with themes, or with circumstances, whenever the occasion has been presented.

"This intimate and immediate responsiveness to, and sympathy with, subjects and occasions, is an immense gift—charming not only, but always fertilizing, and always refreshing.

"Then put beyond that (for certainly it properly goes beyond and farther off) his wonderful *animal vigor*, his fullness of bodily power; his *voice*, which can thunder and whisper alike; his *sympathy with Nature*, which is so intimate and confidential that she tells him all her secrets, and supplies him with continual images; and, above all, put as the crown upon the whole that *enthusiasm for Christ* to which he has himself referred this evening, and which has certainly been the animating power in his ministry—the impression upon his soul that he, having seen the glory of the Son of God, has been set here to reflect that glory upon others; to inspire their minds with it; to touch their hearts with it; to kindle their souls with it, and so to prepare them for the heavenly realm—put all these together, and you have some of the elements of power in this great Preacher—not all of them, but some, snatched hurriedly from the great treasure-house. There you have a few, at any rate, of the traits and forces of him whose

power has chained you, and quickened and blessed you, during all these years."

The abounding physical vigor of the man, his sunny good nature, the loving spirit with which he regarded his God and every work of his Father's hands down through all sorts and conditions of men, and animals, and plants, to the face of inanimate nature; his quick sense of humor, of the incongruities not only, but of the aptitudes of life; and the fresh impulse by which his mouth uttered the abundance of the heart, all these elements were a part of his power; but also offered one of the most frequent objections made to him. Very frequently the ripple of a laugh would run over the face of the congregation, and when after the service the new-come listener, shocked to find that he had laughed in church, stopped to analyze the matter, he found that it was not mere fun or a joke at which he had laughed, but that he had been startled by some unlooked-for, unaccustomed simile, and that it was quite as much the novelty of the idea and the surprising deftness of the illustration which had provoked his risibles as any sense of jocosity. Still, while this was the frequent case, there was indeed no lack of humor in itself—though never for itself, in public ministrations. He says:—

"To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to have Christ so melted and dissolved in you that when you preach yourself you preach Him, as Paul did, to have every part of you living and luminous with Christ, and thus to make use of everything that is in you, your analogical reasoning, your logical reasoning, your imagination, your mirthfulness, your humor, your indignation, your wrath, to take everything that is in you, all steeped in Jesus Christ, and to throw yourself with all your power upon the congregation—that has been my theory of preaching the gospel. A good many folks have laughed at the idea of my being a fit preacher because I laughed, and because I made somebody else laugh. I never went out of my way to do it in my life; but, if some sudden turn of a sentence, like the crack of a whip, sets men off, I do not think worse of it for that—not a bit! I have felt that man should consecrate every gift that he has got in him that has any relation to the persuasion of men and to the melting of men—that he should put them all on the altar, kindle them all, and let them burn for Christ's sake."

There is another point in this regard that may as well be mentioned here. That is, that his humorous passages, although perfectly natural and frequently unconscious, were quite as often the result of intuition and intention. In his "Yale Lectures," in answer to the question of one of the students as to whether it was a proper thing to make an audience laugh by an illustration, he replied:—

"Never turn aside from a laugh any more than you would from a cry. Go ahead on your Master's business and do it well. And remember this, that every faculty in you was placed there by the dear Lord for his service's sake. Never try to raise a laugh for the laugh's sake, or to make men merry as a piece of sensation-alism, when you are preaching on solemn things; that is allowable on a picnic, but not in the pulpit, where you are preaching of God and of man's destiny. But if a laugh comes up naturally do not stifle it. Strike that chord; and particularly if you want to make an audience weep. If I can make them laugh, I do not thank anybody for the next move; I will make them cry. Did you ever see a woman carrying a pan of milk quite full, and it slops over on one side, that it did not immediately slop over on the other also?

"If you quote stale jokes; if you make queer turns because they will make people laugh, and to show that you have power over the congregation, you will prove yourselves contemptible fellows. But if, when you are arguing any question, the thing comes upon you so that you see a point in a ludicrous light, you can sometimes flash it at your audience, and accomplish at a stroke what you are seeking to do by a long turn of argument; and that is entirely allowable. In such a case do not attempt to suppress laughter; it is a part of the nature God gave us, and which we can use in his service. When you are fighting the devil, shoot him with anything."

True to his instinct of keeping his sympathies alive toward the people and entering into the life-conditions of men whom he was trying to influence, he habituated himself to study men and seek them out. Saturday especially he always made a play-day in preparation for Sunday. A day of genial, pleasurable, social exhilaration, a day of seeing agreeable things, of looking at pictures, of standing on the street and watching the people and teams go by (he was very fond of horses), of crossing the ferry and going

up into the pilot-house, where he was on friendly and familiar terms with all the pilots, of going along the docks and on to the ships, into ship-yards, into foundries and locomotive works. He liked to go to Tiffany's, where he would ask, 'What are the men doing to-day?' And so, with some member of the house he would go down to the ateliers and watch the workmen silver-plating and engraving, and learn to understand what they were doing, and why, and not only that, but to get a sympathetic insight into their feelings and ideas. Thus he constantly fed his heart with the sympathies of humanity, refreshed his blood and nerves and brain, and stored his mind with a great amount of curious and interesting knowledge, which reappeared in figures and illustrations and apt arguments.

In regard to his gathering of knowledge, which he was diligently doing by incessant study of books and men, he never did it in the formal and methodical way of having each subject done up by itself, labeled and docketed and filed away in its own pigeon-hole, but his broad mind received facts and ideas much as the soil receives the seed, and showers, and sunshine. They disappeared and became a part of himself, to reappear in newer forms of vital strength and beauty.

He was, and to the end of his life continued to be, a great reader. He made close study of the constitutional history of the United States, and was diligent in mastering the ideas of great rulers. He found when he came to the East great stores of intellectual and artistic wealth, which opened to him new worlds. His pecuniary means were already enlarged. He received at first fifteen hundred dollars per annum, which was a large advance upon the four hundred, and six hundred, of his Western pastorates, and which, as the Plymouth society grew in wealth and strength, was properly enlarged from time to time. He made it a point to follow up in literature, as well as in practical research, every topic that especially interested him. Sometimes it was the general history of art, or the special development of architecture, of painting, of sculpture, of engraving, of etching; and his library showed illus-

trations of all those splendid lines of thought and achievement: and it was not upon his book-shelves and walls alone but in himself that could be found unusual stores of knowledge. Music and organ-building; soap and cosmetics; pottery and porcelains; large additions to his already extensive knowledge of flowers, trees, and methods of cultivation; general literature, history, theology, metaphysics, natural science, and especially the whole line of philosophic literature which tends towards the co-ordination of these great departments; physiology, anatomy, and medicine,—and in short a large array of books upon topics of interest to all humanity, and therefore not foreign to him, bore witness to the incessant labor with which he stored his growing mind.

These things of course began by slow degrees and enlarged and accumulated more and more rapidly as the years increased his pecuniary means and his power of assimilating the mental stores thus gathered. But the point here is to show his method, and to emphasize the idea which he has in many places laid stress upon, that genius is but the power of combustion, and needs fuel if it is to produce light and heat.

There is always a temptation, in considering events which have successively issued along a course of years, to read the beginnings in the light of later developments. From one point of view this is of course natural and necessary, for we can better understand the bearings of early matters when we have their consequences before us. For our present purpose, however, we do not need to impute undue wisdom to the mind of this young reformer, in the idea that he foresaw all the wonderful crisis of his first twenty-five years in Plymouth Church, but it is essential, as we believe, to a comprehension of his modes of action and the resulting influence which he exerted, that we insist from the first upon his disinterested, loyal, ardent devotion to *God as a power manifest in unselfish love rather than in autocratic force*; and the consistent application of that belief as a guiding principle in all the affairs of life. Out of this grew his intense devotion to the inter-

ests of man as God's child; his insistence upon the constant need of the elevating influences of unselfishness as personified in Christ and the constant importance of infusing this spirit into human institutions of every character,—the family, the church, society, the city, the state,—all the outgrowths of man's organic social tendency. If his life be followed by the indications of this cardinal principle, it will be seen to have been nobly persistent and earnestly steady. All those variations which men have been accustomed to call "inconsistency," "errors of judgment," "the great mistake of his life" (of which he committed a great many, each one being "the greatest" according to the point of view of the specific interests—personal, ecclesiastical, or political—which he at the time opposed) will be seen to have been impulses along the general line which he had laid down for himself from the first, and by the inspiration of which he builded the foundations and the superstructure of Plymouth Church, that strong fortress of human hearts, in which he abode and from which his power went forth during forty years.

V.

POLITICAL CAREER.

THE portion of Mr. Beecher's work covered by this volume* grew directly out of his nature, training, convictions, and the enlargement of his powers as set forth in the foregoing chapters. It includes many of his appeals to the public intelligence and conscience with reference to slavery, freedom, war, and the general development of civil liberty in the United States. The simplest way of getting at the relations and the influence of these appeals will be to make a brief running account of the public affairs of the time, noting especially the points accented by the addresses.

The time covered by these addresses has been divided into three periods: I. Freedom and Slavery, 1847-1861; II. Civil War, 1861-1865; III. Civil Liberty, 1865-1885.

The pivot upon which the history of the United States turned during the entire fifty years of Mr. Beecher's public work, was unquestionably American Slavery, with its consequences. While his relations to it were the most noticeable feature of his own life, the subject itself is of course too large to be entered upon here except roughly; but the facts that in it was the storm-center of all those tumultuous times, and that—while thousands of other patriotic and sensible Christian men, as well as pious Christian ministers, were not able to see the dangers of it—this man's love for the Father-God, and his esteem and sympathy for his brother-man, were outraged by the existence and still more by the attempted extension of that great evil, give the key-note which must be accepted in order to resolve his whole life into harmony.

*“Patriotic Addresses : In America and England, 1850 to 1885, on Slavery, The Civil War, and The Development of Civil Liberty in the United States. By Henry Ward Beecher. Edited, with a Review of Mr. Beecher's Personality and Influence in Public Affairs, by John R. Howard.”

He conceived it to be his duty, not only, but his necessity, to think, to speak, to instruct in all the higher views of their daily duty the people who were following him; their duty not only towards God but also towards their fellow-men,—whether in the family, or more broadly in society, or in the close interplay of commercial activities, or in the still higher organic relations of the city and of the state and of the country at large. And thus it was that, whatever line of private or public duty made demands upon individuals, the moral and spiritual side of it found Henry Ward Beecher promptly at work, endeavoring to throw light upon the practical path of right doing.

In a sermon entitled “The Sphere of the Christian Minister” (January 24, 1869) occurs the following:—

“There is a popular impression—and it seems to men like a philosophical truism—that every man understands his own business best; that he need not be meddled with, at least till he asks advice; and that even then no one can counsel him so wisely as one of the same craft. Complaint is often made on that ground, of ministers, that they meddle with things that they do not understand. I think they do, too, when they preach theology. There is an amazing deal of ‘wisdom’ that will be called ‘rubbish’ one of these days. But when ministers meddle with practical life, with ethical questions and relations, they are meddling with just what they do understand,—or ought to. If they do not understand these things, they have failed to prepare themselves for one of the most important functions to which they could address themselves, as ministers. . . .

“There is nothing, however, more untrue than that every man understands his own business best, if by that you mean that he understands it in its largest relations—in its results upon the general welfare; and more particularly if you mean that he understands his own business best in its moral influence upon himself, upon his fellows, and upon society. Usually, none understand the moral bearing of a business so little as the men who are embarked in it. . . . The baker knows more about kneading dough, about the time it should require to rise, and about how long it should be in baking; but when it is done, and I take the loaf and eat it, then I am as good a judge of bread as he is. And so it is with various kinds of business. They bring out results here and there, and the community is made to take the benefit or damage, as the case may be. And moral teachers who stand

and look on—who have discrimination, large reflection, clear intuition, and who, above all, judge from a moral stand-point—such men are competent to be critics of everything that there is in human society. . . . The moment a man so conducts his profession that it touches the question of right and wrong, he comes into my sphere. There I stand; and I put God's measure, the golden reed of the sanctuary, on him and his course; and I am his master, if I be a true seer and a true moral teacher; and I am not meddling. He has brought his business up to me the moment when it comes into the sphere of right and wrong. . . .

“A man may preach politics too much. A man may do it foolishly. So a man may administer a bank foolishly, manufacture foolishly, or carry on any other business foolishly; but that is no reason why a bank should not be established, why a man may not engage in manufacturing, or why business of any sort should not be carried on. A minister may not be discreet in preaching upon secular topics, but that is no reason why they should not be preached upon. There have been indiscreet ministers from the days of the apostles, and it would be strange if in the future there should not be found here and there one that is not discreet. But the duty of introducing such topics is now generally acknowledged. I think that question is settled, for your life and mine at least.”

So it is; and it was settled very largely by the courage and persistence, the intense moral earnestness, and the large conservative wisdom of Henry Ward Beecher. Whoever will read the contents of this volume—which offers examples of his newspaper writing, discourses in Plymouth pulpit, political speeches pure and simple, and popular addresses on themes of general interest—will be struck, from the point of view of the present time, with the breadth and steadiness of his position in the earlier days of excitement. His arguments are based on the law and the constitution of the land as well as those of humanity, and it is surprising to note his steadfast course, not only amid the turmoil about him but also under the pressure of his own interior impulsive forces. The strength of his position and the wholesomeness of his advice—temporarily enforced by his eloquence but generally justified by events—went far to make his theory of the clergyman's business practicable.

DIVISION I.—FREEDOM AND SLAVERY.

Just at the time when young Beecher came to Brooklyn (the autumn of 1847) the question of slavery had again arisen for discussion in Congress and throughout the country. The Mexican war, following on the heels of the annexation of Texas in the interests of the extension of slavery into new and unexhausted territory, had just closed, although peace was not formally declared until July 4, 1848. Florida, Iowa, and Wisconsin were shortly afterward admitted as States; Texas also; gold was discovered in California; and the admission of California as a State was complicated with the attempted extension of slavery into that territory as well as into Utah and New Mexico. The "Free-soil Party" was organized among the people in 1848, under the lead of ex-President Martin Van Buren; the "Wilmot Proviso" in Congress, excluding slavery from the new territories, was opposed by Mr. Calhoun's resolution limiting the right of Congress to interfere; agitation grew hotter and hotter. Webster and Calhoun in the Senate only typified the growing excitement throughout the country; for the seeds planted years before by Giddings and Garrison and other heroes of conscience, and wet with the tears and bloody sweat of social martyrdom, were slowly bearing their fruit, and from year to year extending their harvests in the Northern soil. But the time of triumph was a weary way off,—not yet to be descried even by the eye of faith; nay, the fight seems to have been carried on almost without hope, sustained only by a sturdy love for God and mankind.

The late Senator H. S. Foote of Mississippi, in his "War of the Rebellion, or Scylla and Charybdis,"* undertakes to show that the "irrepressible conflict" between freedom and slavery "could not have arisen but for the most unskillful and blundering management of the men in power—the incessant agitation of sectional factionists, both in the North and in the South, and the unwise disregard of that august spirit of conciliation and compromise in which our

* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866.

complex frame of government is known to have had its origin." But he miscalculates what were the necessities of slavery for more territory to grow in, and ignores the deep hold which the spirit of freedom, in spite of political and commercial interests, had upon the Northern people. Far clearer-eyed were the anti-slavery men of the North, on the one hand, and on the other men like Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, who was doubtless what Mr. Foote describes him—"one of the most intellectual and pure-minded men that have ever lived," and who held the view that the free States and the slave States could not continue to live together harmoniously, but the latter would soon find it necessary to resort to separation.

"Early in the eventful year of 1850," says Mr. Foote, "he [Calhoun] avowed to me . . . his own painful and firmly riveted conviction on this subject, and declared, in language of extraordinary emphasis, that he regarded a *peaceful* withdrawal from the Union as altogether practicable, provided its execution should be attempted under the lead of Maryland and Virginia; making known at the same time that he had already drawn out a Constitution for the new republic which he contemplated, in which the slave-holding principle had been given a predominant influence."

When, in 1850, after much heated discussion both in Congress and throughout the country, Henry Clay, the author of the Missouri Compromise of 1821, proposed to consolidate all past compromises involving slavery,—covering the disputed subjects of Texas boundary, Utah and New Mexico territories, California, partial abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, rendition of fugitive slaves, and other matters—into one "Omnibus bill" of thirty-nine sections, the excitement grew more intense than ever. The essential element of the bill was the yielding on the part of the South of the admission of California as a free State, and on the part of the North the fugitive slave clause, which not only allowed Southerners to reclaim escaping slaves but made it the duty of Northerners to help them.

In 1849 the Congregationalists had established in New

York the weekly religious paper called *The Independent*, having as its editors, Dr. Leonard Bacon, Dr. Richard S. Storrs, Jr., and Dr. Joseph P. Thompson. To this paper Mr. Beecher was asked to contribute; and, as the growing conflict between slavery and freedom was at that time the motive of pretty much all political and much social and commercial activity, it was inevitable that that should be the line of discussion most attractive to him. His utterances were so bold and ringing that the editors, highly as they appreciated the value of his contributions, both as moral forces and as journalistic attractions, did not care to be held responsible for them, and so it came about that his articles were usually signed with a star, or large asterisk.

Many an article on all sorts and conditions of subjects went into these "Star Papers," and made its mark upon the sentiment and opinions of the times; but the paper which, it may be almost said, made Henry Ward Beecher a national rather than a local force was the one which stands first in the "Addresses" reprinted in this volume, in the division entitled "Freedom and Slavery," an article singling out from Mr. Clay's "Omnibus bill" its vital points, and asking the question, "Shall We Compromise?"

The Congressional agitation had been going on for months. The North was profoundly stirred by the contest, discussing all the ins and outs of the complicated legislative proposal. The *Independent* had several strong articles on the situation, but when on February 21, 1850, this article appeared, disregarding the artificial complications and setting forth in all plainness the issue—"Slavery is right; slavery is wrong. Slavery shall live; slavery shall die. Slavery shall extend; slavery shall not extend"—it struck the key-note towards which succeeding events toned up the North until Fort Sumter brought the great outburst, and the war, begun by the South, killed slavery and gave the South new life. The article was copied everywhere, and cleared the atmosphere. The eyes of many were opened. It penetrated to the South and arrested the earnest attention of the dying Calhoun. Mr. Beecher's position was that slavery must extend—or die;

that it was both constitutional and morally right for the North to refuse to consent to its extension, while it was a base betrayal of the right to yield extension for the sake of a temporary and fallacious peace.

But the conscience of the people grows slowly; and that of their "representative" politicians and statesmen slower yet. The fight in Congress went on, the Southern demands growing higher and haughtier, until the most trusted champion of the Northern views, Daniel Webster, on the 7th of March lowered his banner and made the famous plea for conciliation which, whatever its motive, was his own final disgrace and death-blow. Calhoun, who from his dying bed still sent his influence forth, had his last address read in the Senate by Mr. Mason, and died on the 31st of the same month.

After eight months of discussion, Mr. Clay's "Omnibus Compromise" failed, but the several elements of it, including the Fugitive Slave Law, passed singly, as separate bills, during the ensuing summer (1850).

Of course the passage of these bills, which instead of being merely a friendly arrangement of opposing policies were really a compromise of moral principle, did not bring peace. The year 1850 closed and 1851 opened in the midst of seething agitation. The "May Anniversaries" of the various reformatory and religious societies formed a great feature of those days in New York, and among the others the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was one whose meetings in the old Broadway Tabernacle were always densely thronged,—and not always with sympathizers in the cause which the Society had at heart.

Mr. Beecher was from his first coming a favorite speaker at those meetings, and in their turbulent audiences gained much of the training that served him so well in later days. In one of his speeches there, delivered May 9, 1850, he had been exhibiting the necessity of slavery to keep men brutal. "The slave," said he, "is made just good enough to be a slave, and no more. It is a penitentiary offense to teach him more." Here a person in the gallery who had been one of a group frequently interrupting the proceed-

ings, exclaimed, "It's a lie!" The audience was shocked into a kind of consternation, but Mr. Beecher promptly and smilingly said: "Well, whether it is a penitentiary offense or not, I will not argue with the gentleman. *Doubtless he has been there, and ought to know.*" Of course the tumultuous laughter and applause gave him the immediate control of the audience again, and he proceeded.

The second of the Addresses in this volume is one describing the nature of "American Slavery," which was delivered before the Society on May 6, 1851. This address, devoted to a discussion of American Slavery from the stand-point of a Christian minister, was at once a helpful impulse to all the anti-slavery workers, and a stinging rebuke to the men of his own profession, who with notably few exceptions systematically avoided mention of *the sin* of those times. In one of his speeches in England, in 1863, Mr. Beecher said:—

"You never can understand what emasculation has been caused by the indirect influence of slavery. I have mourned all my mature life to see men growing up who were obliged to suppress all true conviction and sentiment, because it was necessary to compromise between the great antagonisms of North and South. There were the few pronounced anti-slavery men of the North, and the few pronounced slavery men of the South, and the Union lovers (as they were called during the latter period) attempting to hold the two together, not by a mild and consistent adherence to truth plainly spoken, but by suppressing truth and conviction, and saying, 'Everything for the Union.' . . . They were attempting to lasso anti-slavery men by this word 'Union,' and to draw them over to pro-slavery sympathies and the party of the South, by saying, 'Slavery may be wrong and all that, but we must not give up the Union.' Not until the sirocco came, not until that great convulsion that threw men as with a backward movement of the arm of Omnipotence from the clutches of the South and from her sorceress-breath—not until then was it, that with their hundreds and thousands the men of the North stood on their feet and were men again."

In this Anti-Slavery Society address may be seen others of Mr. Beecher's felicitous dealings with interruptions and questions from hostile hearers, put with the intent to

embarrass the speaker, but always having the opposite effect of giving him a chance to turn the point against his attackers.

The third address is an article from the *Independent* concerning the notable Presidential contest of 1856, between James Buchanan, the Democratic candidate, and John C Frémont, the candidate of the newly formed Republican party, which had grown up, suddenly but solidly, within four years.

On the admission of California as a State, in 1850, Frémont had been sent to Washington as one of its Senators. In 1843-5, as captain of a government exploring party, he had located the passes of the Rocky Mountains, through which to-day's immense railway traffic is pouring; in 1846 he had raised the "Bear flag" and declared the independence of California, and, by prompt co-operation on land with Commodore Stockton by sea, had practically conquered and secured to the United States the possession of that magnificent territory. He had acted for some time as Military Governor, and had taken prominent part in forming the Constitution, being the man by whose influence the phrases that forever excluded slavery from the State were incorporated into that document. Events moved rapidly, both among the people and in Congress. In 1851 Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" appeared, and thrilled the world with the dreadful possibilities of American slavery: the effect of that book cannot be overestimated. In 1852 died Clay and Webster, while Charles Sumner entered the Senate as Webster's successor from Massachusetts: the day of compromises was passing.

The administration of Pierce, 1853 to 1857, was signalized by the appearance of a new idea, put forth by Stephen A. Douglas, (Democratic) senator from Illinois, who, ambitious to reach the Presidency, proposed—as a measure that should please the Democrats of both sections, North and South—the Kansas-Nebraska bill, allowing the people of those Territories to decide for themselves as to the existence or non-existence of slavery, when they should apply for admission as States. This idea, popularly called "Squatter

Sovereignty," was an express abrogation of the Missouri Compromise of 1821, as both Kansas and Nebraska lay north of the line agreed upon and fixed as the permanent extreme northern limit of slave-holding States. The contest was long and bitter, but the bill passed, and was signed by the President in May, 1854. Then followed the horrors of "bleeding Kansas," the rush of immigration thither from North and from South, and the hideous turmoil of border warfare. The free-soil men were determined to save the territory from slavery, and the pro-slavery men equally determined to inoculate it with that cancerous disease. Throughout the North the free-soil ardor grew and intensified. Money, furniture, implements of industry, arms, and ammunition were contributed for the use of the immigrants, who were exhorted to defend their own lives and political rights, and to secure the territory for freedom. Mr. Beecher and Plymouth Church took active part in all this concentration of purpose and of force for the redemption of Kansas. The political tangle of the time is clearly outlined in Hay and Nicolay's elaborate "Life of Abraham Lincoln" (*Century Magazine*, 1887,) not only as to Mr. Lincoln's debates with Douglas in Illinois (which did so much to nationalize the name and just fame of the former), but also as to the struggle in Kansas, it is shown how the "border-ruffian" from Missouri was the convenient tool of Southern policy to outvote and even to destroy the *bona fide* settlers.

Mr. Beecher's activity at this time was marked and influential, but we have not found any single address which seemed to represent his customary way of setting forth the general principles of a particular crisis.

Out of the Kansas struggle came the beginning of the Republican Party. The Free-soil Party had organized at Buffalo under Van Buren, bolting from the Whigs, in 1848; this was the germ: in 1852 the Whigs had finally gone under, when Pierce was elected: in 1856 the Kansas troubles had permeated the entire North with discussion, and the expression of resentment at the perfidy of the Compromise repeal took on increasingly the form of a deter-

mination that *slavery should not be extended*, on any pretext, into new territories. This was the heart of the declarations of the new party; and John Charles Frémont, "the Pathfinder;" the conqueror of California; South Carolinian by birth, but anti-slavery in principle; son-in-law of Senator Benton of Missouri (a life-long Southern anti-slavery man, and the projector of trans-continental traffic); husband of the brilliant and fascinating Jessie Benton;—a man combining a remarkable number of qualities, achievements, and associations to surround his name with a halo of romance—was made the hero and the standard-bearer.

The great cry of the Republicans was "Non-extension of slavery!" of the Democrats, "Non-interference with Southern domestic institutions!" and of a third party (the "Americans," with Millard Fillmore as candidate), "Peace at any price; peace and union!" Mr. Beecher, with the full consent of his church, threw himself into this political contest with all the force of his nature. He preached and spoke and wrote, constantly and vehemently. He worked throughout the State of New York, speaking two and three times a week, for three hours at a time, to open-air audiences of from eight thousand to ten thousand, and was universally recognized as a very potent factor in the rapid growth of Republican sentiment. Besides this, Frémont's campaign headquarters were in the business office of one of Mr. Beecher's earliest friends and parishioners; so that Plymouth Church had a large share in the formation and early direction of the Republican party. A new growth out of an old stem, Republicanism was cut off from the decaying Whig stock, and, planted in justice and nourished with the love of freedom, it increased mightily in strength and bore glorious fruit.

Mr. Beecher's article (June 26, 1856) entitled "On Which Side is Peace?" (reproduced page 196), presents the main theme of the discussions of that campaign, and shows how unerringly he struck at the central element of every matter in question. There was great fear lest the South be angered by the election of a free-

soil President, and war ensue; but Mr. Beecher's prediction, that war was much more likely to grow out of further truckling to the slave-power, in four years became fact.

The success of James Buchanan (although Mr. Beecher and many other leading Republicans believed that Frémont was elected, but "counted out" in the returns from Pennsylvania, a State whose large number of electors determined that election) is well known. So also are the succeeding events of the next few years: Chief Justice Taney's Dred Scott decision; the passing of personal-liberty laws in several of the free States to counteract the Fugitive Slave Law; the continued outrages and massacres of free-soil settlers in Kansas; and finally the rash enterprise of old John Brown of Ossawatimie,—a man always fanatical and ill-balanced, and at last crazed by strife and the murder of several of his family in Kansas,—who, with seventeen companions, seized the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va., with the hope of obtaining arms and establishing an insurrectionary center for the liberation of slaves.

It was on Sunday, October 30, 1859, while Brown and his little company lay in prison awaiting trial, that Mr. Beecher preached in Plymouth Church his sermon entitled "The Nation's Duty to Slavery" (page 203). Its faithful assertion of the principles of liberty and the abominations of slavery, combined with Christian kindness to the South and the duty of wise forbearance in action,—for the sake of the slave, of the master, and of the country, North and South,—shows the discretion, nobleness of thought, and sincerity of belief in God and the force of moral ideas, which go far to explain how it was that conservative people felt willing to submit themselves to the influence of Mr. Beecher's eloquence. No Southerner to-day would be able to dissent from his doctrine as expounded in that discourse, or could help a warming of heart toward a man who, in the midst of such a tempest of popular excitement along the line of principles which he himself had done so much to inspire, could yet so temperately and consider-

ately and Christianly stretch forth the restraining hand of wisdom.

Mr. Beecher's influence in the formative days of the Republican party was wider than appeared on the surface. He was in relations of friendly intercourse and interchange of counsel with men like Horace Greeley and Henry J. Raymond, the two journalists who were foremost in the shaping of principles and policies, and all the leaders in the reform-politics of the time looked to him not only for the eloquent enforcement of courses laid out but for wisdom in preliminary councils. The newspapers reported his every word,—in pulpit, lecture-room, prayer-meeting, public assembly, special interview or casual street remark. When we consider how constantly and mercilessly reports of Mr. Beecher's utterances were put into the public prints—sometimes correct, often erroneous, and even maliciously perverted—and how unreservedly he poured forth at any and all times his honest thought or feeling, it is amazing that so much wisdom should appear in his history, and so little foolishness. How many men could endure such a record,—not once or twice, or during four years of a presidential term, but for forty continuous years of public life at the metropolis of the nation? No other human being has ever been put to such a test. His influence, then, was in some sense atmospheric; it passed from him, consciously and unconsciously; it spread abroad, and permeated not only the great metropolitan community in which he lived but the country at large.

Those who insist on a division line between "sacred" and "secular" things can hardly understand how it should be that this man, to whom all lines of life and duty were sacred and infused with the conscious inspiration of divine and human love, could pass as he did with his church from the heats of the political struggle of 1856 into a period of intense spiritual and religious labor. His theories,—the healthfulness of enthusiasm, provided that a proper variation of its objects relieved the tension of one line of faculties by bringing others into play; the natural modes of

appropriation of the all-pervasive influences of the Divine Spirit; and the practical strengthening effect of such "seasons of refreshment" for work in the world,—seem to have received justification at this time. From 1857 to 1859, Plymouth Church enjoyed a very high state of religious activity and growth; at one time—in May, 1858—as large a number as three hundred and seventy-eight came into the church on the same Sunday; and the works of beneficence and charity were proportionally increased.

It was in October, 1859, that Abraham Lincoln was invited to deliver a lecture in Cooper Institute, New York, which he agreed to do if he might make it a discussion of political questions. On February 27, 1860, he made his speech, and the *Tribune* of the following day said: "No man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience." Mr. Lincoln "went with the multitude" to hear Beecher; and naturally was not only deeply interested in the preacher, but took pains to see him, and in their social intercourse began a mutual confidence and friendship that bore rich fruit for the nation. Mr. Beecher became an ardent advocate of Lincoln's nomination (which was made in Chicago, May 16, 1860), was a potent force in his election, and—in spite of his bombardments of the Administration on the emancipation question in the first two years of war—was one of the President's most helpful supporters during his four awful years of responsibility.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1860, Lincoln having been elected after a campaign of unparalleled intensity—in which, as before, Plymouth Church and its pastor were forward in active, every-day furtherance of the doctrines preached on Sundays—Mr. Beecher made a review of the situation in a discourse entitled "Against a Compromise of Principle" (page 224). In it, after glancing at the growth of Christ's kingdom all over the world, as measured by the initiatory declaration of Jesus that he came to teach, to heal, to deliver, the poor and the oppressed—the people—he rejoices at the practical national

verdict against the extension of slavery as declared in Lincoln's election, and then appeals for manhood in the maintenance of that position, not only in spite, but even because, of the threatening storms:—

"It is always safe to be right; and our business is not so much to seek peace as to seek the causes of peace. Expedients are for an hour, but principles are for the ages. Just because the rains descend and winds blow, we cannot afford to build on shifting sands. Nothing can be permanent and nothing safe in this exigency that does not sink deeper than politics or money. We must touch the rock, or we shall never have firm foundations."

About a month later, January 4, 1861, came a day which President Buchanan appointed for national fasting and humiliation and prayer, beseeching the Divine interference in behalf of peace. Of course the South and its Northern allies charged all the agitations to the fanatical opponents of slavery. Mr. Beecher preached a sermon entitled "Our Blameworthiness" (page 246), in which he showed that the troubles were upon the nation because *not too much but too little* had been done for liberty.

The winter passed; March came; Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated president. The Southern leaders had already found that Secession was easier to plan than to effect, for throughout the South were many conservative Whig communities, followers of the earlier teachings of Alexander Stephens and his like, who sturdily held to the traditional love for the old Union and distrust of their life-long political opponents, the Democrats. The South was not "solid," at that time. But whatever forces men into mutual association for common interest does very effectively solidify their action, and, by narrowing the channels of thought and feeling to a single line, unitizes their opinions, for all practical purposes. To "fire the Southern heart" and complete the severance which had been well advanced, Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter were besieged, fired on, and the gallant Anderson with his little force of United States troops forced to lower the national flag and march out. The political contest between "Freedom and Slavery" was at an end.

DIVISION II.—CIVIL WAR.

On Sunday, April 14, during the siege of Sumter, Mr. Beecher preached from the text: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."—Exod. xiv. 15. The discourse has been entitled "The Battle Set in Array" (page 269), and introduces the second division of the Addresses, "Civil War."

The story of "the uprising of a great people" has been well and often told. Fort Sumter did a double work: it fired the Southern heart, but it also aroused the Northern soul. Men were white hot with indignation; yet Mr. Beecher's discourse of that day shows a calm, rational pursuit of the history of the conflict, a discriminating inquiry as to the duty of the North in this crisis, before coming to his solemn appeal for steady determination and his final trumpet-blast of inspiration to "go forward" in the cause of human liberty.

After this, the reader will find a succession of discourses as to men's duties during the war, the titles of which are largely self-explanatory. And any man who lived through the intensities of that time is to be pitied if to-day he can read, in cold type, these appeals to the highest and most unselfish feelings of the heart without wet eyes and a bounding pulse. The discourses are as follows: "The National Flag,"—on presentation of colors to two Companies of the "Brooklyn Fourteenth Regiment;" "The Camp, its Dangers and Duties,"—May, 1861; "Modes and Duties of Emancipation,"—November 26, 1861, setting forth the declarations of Confederate Vice-President Stephens as to Slavery being the "corner-stone" of the Confederacy, and considering the condition of the thousands of escaping slaves and the probable results of national emancipation; "The Success of American Democracy,"—April 13, 1862, the anniversary Sunday of the attack on Fort Sumter,—one of his felicitous tracings of the force of generic principles in the development of events; "National Injustice and Penalty,"—September 22, 1862, just after Lincoln's

preliminary Proclamation of Emancipation and Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*,—in strong maintenance of the President's war-powers and gratulation that at last the Nation had officially repudiated the sin which had—by inevitable action of physical and moral law—evoked such terrible punishment; “The Ground and Forms of Government,”—November 22, 1862,—a philosophical consideration of the character of peoples as the soil out of which their national governments must and do grow, with especial reference to a maintenance of moral principle in the then pending election in the State of New York; and, finally, “Liberty under Laws,”—December 28, 1862, while the confirmatory Proclamation of Emancipation was expected from the President,—a discourse showing the necessity of obedience to the law of any principle, in order to make that principle effective, and the responsibilities of benevolent action for the freedom of other men, which are assumed by those who claim liberty for themselves.

These few sermons do not begin to indicate the continuity and intensity of Mr. Beecher's active exertions during the years mentioned. He was one of the focal points of heat and light, vitalizing the heart and clarifying the vision of the country. In the newspapers, on the platform, in his own pulpit and lecture-room, and in all manner of gatherings, he was always at work. To arouse and enlighten the public conscience, to drive up the government to Emancipation, and to sustain the authorities and the army in forwarding the war to that end, as the only permanent, because the only just, foundation for peace—this was his consuming desire. In many powerful articles he urged Emancipation on the President, whose apparent reluctance in that matter was not then understood. In the light of later events, we have learned, as Mr. Beecher did, that Mr. Lincoln was willing and glad to go just as fast and as far as he would be sustained in doing by public opinion,* but no more.

* Frémont's Proclamation, in August, 1861, emancipating the slaves of persistent rebels in the Department of the West, thrilled the North with the *idea* that made possible Lincoln's larger announcement in September, 1862,—the power inherent in “military necessity.”

Doubtless he was right; and yet it was needful that there should be also such moral seers as Beecher to divine, and, like flaming beacons on the headlands, to throw light upon the course the people must take.

In the spring of 1863, Mr. Beecher was worn out with his labors, for he had spared nothing of himself, and his physician and his Plymouth people pushed him off to Europe for some months of recuperation. The narrative of this trip in the companionship of his friend, Dr. John H. Raymond, then president of Vassar College, has been told by both of them, and may be found—full of beauty and interest and refreshment—in Dr. Raymond's "Life and Letters" before referred to (page 40). It was said at the time that Mr. Beecher had been sent by the Government to try to influence English opinion; but that was of course untrue. He went simply for rest, and in passing through England refused to speak there at all, except at a complimentary "Breakfast" tendered him by Congregational clergymen and laymen in London.

His mind about it may be found in the following extract from a private letter written at Brussels, Sept. 9, 1863, just before the two friends started to leave the Continent:—

"John begins to feel homesick. His face is set toward the West. Mine would be also but that I know not what I shall have to do in England, and I do not wish to get up a fever of returning and then find myself obliged to remain several weeks longer. So I contrive *not to think*, except at intervals. How glad I shall be if when in London I find that I need not speak! In truth, my friend, I have no heart for it. England is selfish and cannot be made to recognize it. Her opinion of us has very little value. We do not need her, and she is in little danger of going into the fight. Why should we attempt to ameliorate her prejudices and to thrust unwelcome truth down her incredulous throat? I should not hesitate to pass on, refusing to speak, but for one circumstance. There is a struggling band of noble men who from the first have been true to us and are advocating, through good report and evil report, American ideas in England. Should they say to me, 'You owe it to true friends who have been faithful to you in the darkest hours, to strengthen their hands and give them whatever influence your presence may exert,'

I do not see how I could refuse to listen, and comply. But I long to get home. I am well, have escaped my catarrh, am rested, and now desire to go to work again."

On his return to England he did speak, however, and all the world knows how and with what effect. We have reproduced, as prefatory to his speeches in England, the article by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, which on Mr. Beecher's return was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1864. It is entitled "The Minister Plenipotentiary,"—a joke which, like most of Dr. Holmes's wit, is instinct with wisdom and truth. This article (page 422) is the best description of Mr. Beecher's extraordinary triumph in England that has ever been published, and it shows the profound effect which his unauthorized but splendidly authenticated mission had, both abroad and at home.

The public speeches at Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, and those at several farewell breakfasts, follow next in the volume; and it has seemed of especial interest to give also the essential portion of Mr. Beecher's own account of the speeches (page 640)—not a formal written document, but an off-hand talk to friends, one of whom had thoughtfully provided the presence of Mr. Ellinwood, for so many years, before and since, Mr. Beecher's regular stenographic reporter.

Following this is his address (page 654) delivered after his return at the enthusiastic home-reception by his fellow citizens of Brooklyn (November 19, 1863), in which he describes to them how it was that the upper classes of Great Britain were adverse to the Federal cause in the War and yet were restrained from unfriendly action by the great heart of the common people, who, although non-voting, exercised a strong influence upon the governing and commercial classes. It is—like portions of his speeches in England—a rational and affecting appeal to men to "Put yourself in his place" and look at things from other people's point of view; to see the other side; to make allowances for differing circumstances and consequent opinions and sentiments; and so—in consonance with his theological and religious teachings—a catholic plea for

liberty of opinion with harmony of feeling. It produced almost as marked an effect on American resentment against England, as his efforts on the other side of the water did upon English misunderstanding and prejudice against the North, during the war.

The years 1864-5 entailed less exhausting work upon Mr. Beccher than had been laid on him in the foregoing years. The re-election of Abraham Lincoln in 1864 enlisted his ardent efforts; but the tide of war had turned, and moreover the entire enginery of the North had now become organized and was in regular operation—socially, commercially, fiscally, industrially, and in all lines of material and moral force—sustaining the Government as a matter of course. Side currents there were, eddies of discontent and reaction, turbulent passages caused by temporary obstructions, but the great flood of life in all the Northern States flowed full and strong in one direction. In March, 1864, Congress revived the grade of Lieutenant-General in order to confer it on Grant, whose continued Western successes had drawn all eyes upon him, and he was brought to the East and put in command of all the armies, with especial control of the Army of the Potomac, which, down to this time, had done magnificent fighting but under generals who allowed their victories to remain indecisive and fruitless.

This now was changed, and the battles of The Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Five Forks, Petersburg, mark the dreadful, bloody, but irresistible steps that led to Appomattox and peace. On April 9, 1865, the Confederate army laid down their arms, were paroled as prisoners of war, and permitted to return to their homes. In the "Life of Robert E. Lee" we read: "The victors were magnanimous; they abstained from every appearance of insult toward the vanquished. Abundant victuals were distributed to the prisoners who were dying of hunger." And this was not only the official action of commanders, but the Federal soldiers themselves, gallantly appreciating the gallantry of their recent foes, joyfully fraternized with them, offering their own rations, tobacco, and good fellowship generally.

Of men in responsibility, perhaps the two who had borne the heaviest burdens of care, and who were personally most interested in ending the rebellion, were President Lincoln and General Grant. On March 28, occurred an interview between the President and Generals Grant and Sherman, at City Point, Virginia, at which time the two soldiers thought that it would require one more severe battle to compel submission. Mr. Lincoln was deeply moved, exclaiming that there had been blood enough shed, and asking if it could not be avoided. "That depends," was the answer, "on Jefferson Davis and General Lee." And to General Sherman* the President said that "all he wanted for us was to defeat the opposing armies and to get the men composing the Confederate armies back to their homes, at work on their farms and in their shops" and "to restore all the men of both sections to their homes." General Grant was like-minded, and upon Lee's surrender urged the disbanding and separating of the rebel armies. He imposed no humiliating conditions, but sent home the disbanded Southern men with food and seed-corn and even allowed them to take their horses for the working of their farms. Sherman's impulses were still more generous in receiving the surrender of Johnston's North Carolina army, and Grant was sent to modify the terms granted, making them conform to those given Lee at Appomattox. In short, *the men who spent themselves in fighting the rebellion were the first and the freest in reconciliation with the conquered rebels.*

The whole hollow Confederacy—exhausted and emptied—now fell in. Among the hitherto resistant points was the city of Charleston, South Carolina, where the active rebellion began; now—desolated by war and fire and poverty—it was re-occupied, and preliminary to the work of restoring its obstructed harbor and rebuilding the shattered shores, the Government thought it well to signalize the downfall of Secession and the original treason of attacking the national flag, by formally raising the stars

*Memoirs of William T. Sherman. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1883.

and stripes on the ruins of Fort Sumter, whence they had been hauled down April 14, 1861, four years before. The ceremonies were imposing: all departments of the government were represented, and the governors of the loyal States, with many invited guests of eminent position or influence. Mr. Beecher was chosen, as the natural exponent of the loyal North, to deliver the oration of the day; Major (by that time, however, Major-General) Robert Anderson, the gallant commander of Moultrie and Sumter under the "baptism of fire," with his own hands hauled up the identical flag that had been lowered, and a salute of one hundred guns was fired—participated in "from every fort and rebel battery that fired on Sumter." Mr. Beecher's oration (page 676) is a grand summing up of the four dreadful years—their meaning, their suffering, their achievements; the benefits accruing from the war to the nation at large, to the North, to the South; the lessons that had been taught, and the spirit in which should be undertaken the new work of "rebuilding the republic." With this address is fitly closed the division of "Civil War,"—an era of great events that developed great men, yet a period during which it is fairly within the bounds of probability to say that the power exerted by the heart and brain of Henry Ward Beecher was not equaled by the merely personal influence of any other single man.

DIVISION III.—CIVIL LIBERTY.

On the evening of the very day in which the nation's joy was thus symbolized and expressed at Sumter, President Lincoln was assassinated. That was on Friday: on Tuesday the steamers brought the crushing news, and early the next day the sad party were speeding northward again. On Sunday of the following week (April 23), Mr. Beecher made a discourse on "Abraham Lincoln." Said he:—

"Never did two such orbs of experience meet in one hemisphere, as the joy and the sorrow of the same week in this land. The joy of final victory was as sudden as if no man had expected it, and as entrancing as if it had fallen a sphere from heaven. It rose up over sobriety, and swept business from its moorings, and

ran down through the land in irresistible course. Men embraced each other in brotherhood, that were strangers in the flesh. They sang, or prayed, or, deeper yet, many could only think thanksgiving and weep gladness. . . .

"In one hour, under the blow of a single bereavement, joy lay without a pulse, without a gleam, or breath. A sorrow came that swept through the land as huge storms sweep through the forest and field, rolling thunder along the sky, disheveling the flowers, daunting every singer in thicket or forest, and pouring blackness and darkness across the land and upon the mountains. Did ever so many hearts, in so brief a time, touch two such boundless feelings? It was the uttermost of joy; it was the uttermost of sorrow;—noon and midnight without a space between!"

We have selected this discourse (page 497) as the opening address of the division entitled "Civil Liberty," because in it is to be found recorded the sentiment of the great President in relation to the land he died for, and the spirit of conservative wisdom and Christian consideration which was shown by Henry Ward Beecher as an instructor of the people in the trying times that followed.

The salient points were: Faith in American institutions; a determination to see slavery finally ended; and a spirit of generous conciliation towards the vanquished South.

"The blow, however, has signally failed. The cause is not stricken; it is strengthened. This nation has dissolved—but in tears only. It stands, four-square, more solid, to-day, than any pyramid in Egypt. This people are neither wasted, nor daunted, nor disordered. Men hate slavery and love liberty with stronger hate and love to-day than ever before. The Government is not weakened, it is made stronger. How naturally and easily were the ranks closed! Another stepped forward, in the hour that the one fell, to take his place and his mantle. . . . Republican institutions have been vindicated in this experience as they never were before. . . . God, I think, has said, by the voice of this event, to all nations of the earth, 'Republican liberty, based upon true Christianity, is firm as the foundation of the globe.'

"Even he who now sleeps has, by this event, been clothed with new influence. . . . Men will receive a new impulse of patriotism for his sake, and will guard with zeal the whole country which he loved so well: I swear you, on the altar of his mem-

ory, to be more faithful to the country for which he has perished. Men will, as they follow his hearse, swear a new hatred to that slavery against which he warred, and which in vanquishing him has made him a martyr and a conqueror: I swear you, by the memory of this martyr, to hate slavery with an unappeasable hatred. Men will admire and imitate his unmoved firmness, his inflexible conscience for the right; and yet his gentleness, as tender as a woman's, his moderation of spirit, which not all the heat of party could inflame, nor all the jars and disturbances of this country shake out of its place: I swear you to an emulation of his justice, his moderation, and his mercy."

These three articles of faith were soon to be put to the test. It is hardly necessary here to enter upon a full discussion of the theories that arose at the end of the war as to the "rebuilding of the republic," and yet some note must be made of them to understand the continuity of Mr. Beecher's course, and the first variance between his line of action and that of the Republican party.

The elements to be harmonized at that time were many and discordant. Mr. Beecher tersely says (page 736):—

"President Lincoln had been assassinated, and Johnson had assumed his place. The statesmen whose vigor and courage had carried the country through the civil war were less adapted to the delicate task of restoring the discordant States to peace and unity than they had been to the sudden duties of war.

"In a general way there were two parties; one counseling a speedy re-adjustment, and the other, a longer probation.

"President Lincoln and Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, in the last conversations which I had with them, inclined to the policy of immediate restoration; and their views had great weight with me."

President Johnson, a man arisen, like Lincoln, from the "poor white" class of a border State, had been a sturdy Tennessee Unionist throughout the war, and had suffered bitterly from the rebellion. He hated secession and its leaders with an almost savage hatred, and was conspicuous after Lincoln's death among those who cried that "treason should be made odious." He instituted the military commission that tried the conspirators who compassed Lincoln's murder, and proclaimed large rewards for the capt-

ure of Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders. He even wished to arrest General Lee, but General Grant sturdily blocked that procedure. The President was a good man for a fight, but a dangerous one for the adjustments of a peaceful settlement.

Mr. Johnson, however, was loyal, not only to the Union, but also to the plan for its restoration which his great predecessor, Lincoln, had mapped out; and upon this he squarely planted himself. Its chief feature was: that the seceded States should be replaced as they had been, except that they should first, as States, acquiesce in the abolition of slavery, repudiate the rebel debt, and repeal the ordinances of secession.

President Lincoln had already, a year and a half before (December, 1863), issued a proclamation of pardon and restoration of the rights of property (except in slaves) to all rebels who should abandon their purposes and take the oath of allegiance, agreeing to abide by the governmental acts and proclamations concerning slavery; and, moreover, providing for a reorganization of any State government by not less than one-tenth of the number of voters of the State. His views were positive and clear.

The Thirty-eighth Congress had closed its session a month before the collapse of the rebellion, on March 3, 1865; Lincoln's assassination was on April 14; the next Congress was not to assemble till December 4: so that Mr. Johnson came into the presidency during an interval. The rebellion had suddenly ceased to be; and it was necessary to act. The constitutional provisions which made it possible for the Government to move steadily forward, without hesitation or convulsion,—even in the face of such colossal events as the instantaneous silence of peace after four clangorous years of war and the assassination of the head of the nation in the midst of the protections of a great capital,—were at the time the wonder and admiration of the world. And it is right, in judging of the acts of a man of Mr. Johnson's antecedents and nature,—strong and honest as an ox, stubborn and vengeful as a mule,—that we should consider what would naturally be the mental atti-

tude of one thus unexpectedly placed in position of great responsibility. Mr. Lincoln—sagacious and patient, while tenacious of his purposes—would probably have assembled Congress in extra session; and, acting by influence rather than by authority, having the gratitude of the South and the confidence of the North, would perhaps have found means of letting Congress have their say while they gave him his way. But some elation after so sudden a rise was natural to Mr. Johnson or the average man (Mr. Lincoln was not an average man); and thus the new President boldly accepted the responsibility of action and assumed the power.

He issued an amnesty proclamation, excepting from it all who, after having been civil or military officers of the United States, had held office under the so-called Confederacy. Between May 29 and July 13 he appointed Provisional Governors over seven States, with instructions to assemble Constitutional Conventions which should formally accept the terms and conditions above mentioned, and then proceed to elect State legislators and congressional representatives. This was all done; and the State legislatures also elected their United States Senators, so that nearly all were ready to enter the Thirty-ninth Congress on its assembling, Dec. 4, 1865.

The President's plan was good, as far as it went; but, first, it was incomplete, making no provision for the status of the liberated slaves; and, secondly, he made the mistake of acting in time of peace as if under martial law, and of usurping for the Executive functions that belonged to the Legislative branch of the United States government. Of course this instantly bred hot dissatisfaction, and the summer of 1865 was filled with cries of increasing dissonance throughout the North.

In October, shortly after returning to his pulpit from his summer rest, Mr. Beecher preached a discourse (which will be found at page 713), entitled, "Conditions of a Restored Union." In this, as was usual with him, he carefully went over the antecedent grounds of fact and of principle,—in reference to the war, the end of the rebellion, the condi-

tion of the South and its people, white and black, the President's ideas and acts,—and then laid down the lines along which he conceived that the country could best be reunited, with the most equitable and therefore the most secure hope of permanent stability.

A few sentences selected from successive portions of the discourse, although not immediately connected, may give briefly the drift of his thought:—

"I can scarcely regard the state of mind that has existed for years in the South as other than a political insanity, and I cannot expect, nor ask you to expect, that in one hour they will get over their enmities, their life-long prejudices and their humiliation. . . . We are to remember that convalescence is often slower and longer than the run of the disease itself."

"Nor are we to demand a surrender of theories and philosophies as a condition of confidence and trust. . . . Let men say that secession *ought* to have been allowed—if they accept the fact that it *is forever disallowed* by the people of this continent."

"It is said that there should be a spirit of humility on the part of the South, . . . that God does not receive sinners back till they are humbled. When you are God you need not receive your brethren back till they are humbled."

"I think that he will be the wisest and most politic statesman who knows how to carry them through this terrible and painful transition with the least sacrifice of their pride, and with the greatest preservation of their self-respect; and if it can be done by the generosity of the North, a confidence will spring up at the South in the future that will repay us for the little self-sacrifice that we may make."

"I am anxious that those who have hitherto been most active for liberty and humanity should produce the first and deepest impression on our brethren in the South by real kindness; and I am very thankful that those who have been representative men in the North, in the main—Gerritt Smith, Mr. Garrison, and others such as they—have been found pleading for lenity, and opposed to rigor and uncharitableness."

"It is desirable, on every account, that the South should be restored at the earliest practicable moment to a participation in our common government. It is foreign to our American ideas that men should be dispossessed of civil rights, if we expect to treat them in any other way than as criminals."

"But there are some conditions precedent."

"It is right that State conventions should be required to abolish slavery, and to assist in the amendment of the Constitution of the United States in that regard."

"And they must, in convention, not only annul their act of secession, but pronounce it to have been *ab initio* void."

"I think that, also, before the States of the South are re-instated, these conventions should have ascertained, and prescribed, and established, the condition of the freedman. They should have established, first, his right to labor, and to hold property, with all its concomitants. They should have established his right to labor as he pleases, where he pleases, and for whom he pleases, and to have sole and undivided the proceeds of his own earnings, with the liberty to do with them as he pleases, just as any other citizen does. They should also have made him to be the equal of all other men before the courts and in the eye of the law. He should be just as much qualified to be a witness as the man that assaults him. He should be under the protection of the laws, with all the opportunities of availing himself of their benefits which any other citizen has."

"It would have been wise, also, for these conventions to have given him the right of suffrage—for it is always inexpedient and foolish to deny a man his natural rights."

"I do not think it consistent with the nature of our institutions for the Federal Government, in and of itself, to attempt permanently to take care of four millions of freedmen by military government. These men are scattered in fifteen States; they are living contiguous to their old masters; the kindness of the white men in the South is more important to them than all the policies of the nation put together. And the best intentions of the government will be defeated if the laws that are made touching this matter are such as are calculated to excite the animosity and hatred of the white people in the South toward the black people there. I except the single decree of emancipation. That must stand, though men dislike it. A true and wise statesmanship consists in conciliating the late masters, and persuading them to accept the freedmen in a spirit of kindness and helpfulness. Calling names, suspecting motives, objurgations, will not help the black man. President Johnson thinks it better that the colored people should receive their rights with the consent of the South; and he waits for it, and influences rather than commands; and I think he is acting with enlightened judgment."

"We are to educate the negroes, and to Christianly educate them. We are to raise them in intelligence more and more, until

they shall be able to prove themselves worthy of citizenship. For, I tell you, all the laws in the world cannot bolster a man up so as to place him any higher than his own moral worth and natural forces put him."

"We have, then, a heavy work before us. We have a work that will tax our faith, and patience, and resources. But it is a work which we may pursue, believing that He who hath brought us thus far in it will carry us through to the end."

If this discourse be carefully read, it will be seen to contain the essence of all the guaranties and conditions finally effected after years of renewed struggle under the Reconstruction Acts; but it differed from the position of the political leaders of the time in that it preferred to *offer* these conditions to the Southern people for their *acceptance* before inviting their participation in the government, while the Republican managers preferred to have Congress *impose* them, in the guise of penalty for rebellion. Mr. Beecher read human nature well. But his "magnanimity" was laughed at and his position fiercely denounced as an abandonment of the blacks; his forebodings of the alternate evil, however, were terribly realized in history.

For by this time the political passions of all sides were aroused. The Republican leaders, fearful lest the President should commit irretrievable blunders, and bring in anew a Southern element which should unite with the Democratic opposition of the North and weaken their power, were blind to anything good in the Johnson plan or man, and the political press was wildly violent; the Anti-slavery element, with the exception of some of the wisest and most notable of the old-time leaders, fearful lest the fruits of their long and bitter warfare for freedom should be sacrificed in the very hour of victory, were with the foremost in denunciation of the President and all who supported him. And, on the other hand, Mr. Johnson, made angry by the outcry, was not only stubborn in holding to what he had done but evinced his weakness by taking pains to show disfavor to representative Northerners, and favor to Southerners, who shrewdly began to pay court to him. His action was impolitic to the last degree. Yet,

inborn and inbred prejudices will tell, in spite of reason; and this "poor white," whose whole life had been a determined struggle to rise in the social scale, could not see his aristocratic fellow Southerners at his feet without feeling the flattery of the situation, and yielding to it.

In December Congress reassembled; but while the Southern States had, as above stated, gone forward and made their preparations subject to the conditions demanded by the President, under full expectation of admission to the national legislature, their representatives were met by Congress with a prompt refusal of admission and referred to a committee on credentials, who kept them cooling their heels and heating their tempers in the lobby; the various grounds of opposition to their entrance being the illegality of the acts of the Constitutional Conventions, of the writs under which the legislators and congressmen were elected, and other proper points of technicality which President Johnson and the Southern reorganizers had in their haste overlooked.

Meantime the first action of Congress (Dec. 18) was the admirable one of proposing the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, by which slavery was forever abolished and Congress given power to enforce the provision by appropriate legislation. This was promptly ratified by the requisite two-thirds of all the States, Northern and Southern. But the winter passed in strife, the point of keenest discussion being the condition of the freed slaves: the President demanding that the States should be admitted, and allowed to regulate that themselves; the majority in Congress demanding full National protection to the freedmen before any of the States should be readmitted. Indeed, the contest now took on the aspect of a question as to the *Restoration* or the *Reconstruction* of the Southern States.

But another element was all this time rising into prominence and increasing power, and that was the ancient race-prejudice of the Southern whites towards the blacks, and their dread—born of the intemperate contest between President Johnson and his opponents at the North—lest the

negro should be given political power, or, as they expressed it, "the bottom rail put on top." That was, in effect, the thing threatened at the North (for the protection of the negro and the continuance in power of the Republican party) and regarded at the South with a mingled feeling of terror and unutterable detestation.

To get a candid view of the ideas and mutual misconceptions that this era bred in the two peoples—for the South and the North had been educated, and still continued, on two distinct and unrelated planes of political and social life—one cannot do better than read Judge A. W. Tourgée's remarkable study of those times, based on his own experience and observation of seventeen years' residence as a Northern man at the South after the war: "A Fool's Errand; By One of the Fools." Discussing the plans of reconstruction, he notes the fact that none of them took any account of

"That strange and mysterious influence which ranges all the way from a religious principle to a baseless prejudice, according to the stand-point of the observer, but always remains a most unaccountable yet still stubborn fact in all that pertains to the governmental organisms of the South,—the popular feeling in regard to the African population of that section. That a servile race, isolated from the dominant one by the fact of color and the universally accepted dogma of inherent inferiority, to say nothing of a very general belief of its utter incapacity for the civilization to which the Caucasian has attained, should be looked on with distrust and aversion, if not with positive hatred, as a co-ordinate political power, by their former masters, would seem so natural that one could hardly expect men of ordinary intelligence to overlook it. That this should arouse a feeling of very intense bitterness when it came as the result of conquest, and the freedom enjoyed by the subject-race was inseparably linked with the memory of loss and humiliation in the mind of the master, would seem equally apparent. But when to these facts was added the knowledge that whoever should advocate such an elevation of the blacks, in that section, was certain to be regarded as putting himself upon their social level in a community where the offender against caste becomes an outlaw in fact, it seems impossible that the wise men of that day should have been so blind as not to have seen that they were doing the utmost possible injury to the

colored race, the country, and themselves, by propounding a plan of re-organization which depended for its success upon the effective and prosperous administration of State governments by this class [the negroes] in connection with the few of the dominant race, who, from whatever motives, might be willing to put themselves on the same level with them in the estimation of their white neighbors."

In view of these facts it is not strange that the rebuffed, humiliated, and alarmed Southerners should in their State legislatures begin to make laws for the practical subjection of the freedmen, who were already talked of as not only freed but to be made the equals of their late owners, and who, with political power in their hands, in places where they were a majority of the inhabitants, would become the practical rulers. The laws made by the new Provisional Southern State legislatures were in truth oppressive and unjust to this unfortunate class, thus ground between the upper and the nether millstone; and were in turn met in Congress by the Civil Rights Bill, which not only declared the blacks citizens, with equal rights before the law, but provided many specifications looking to social as well as political equality with the whites—which of course intensified the feeling tenfold. The bill, vetoed by the President, was repassed over his veto (April 9, 1866), as were the Freedman's Bureau and Refugees Bills. In June, Congress proposed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, providing:—

(1) The citizenship and equality before the law of all persons born or naturalized in the United States; (2) the apportionment of representation in the Federal Congress according to the number of inhabitants in each State [*i. e., counting all the negroes instead of two-thirds of them as heretofore, when their masters voted on them, as slaves*], any abridgment of voting privileges except for crime to reduce the representation proportionately [*a political inducement not to prevent the blacks from voting*]; (3) the exclusion of all men, who had violated an oath to support the United States Constitution, from Federal or State office until relieved of this disability by a two-thirds vote of Congress [*practical disfranchisement of all Southern men of prominence*]; and (4) the validity of the United States debt and invalidity of the rebel debt or any claim of compensation for loss of slaves.

It was two years (1868) before this amendment was adopted by the requisite number of States, and meantime the political fight raged. In August, 1866, the sentiment of those in the North who for various reasons thought that President Johnson's plan was the wiser, even though it had been unwisely forwarded by him, and who believed that the quickest and most natural, and therefore the most enduring, road to peace and relations of mutual interest between the negroes and the whites (who *must have* the labor of their former slaves) would come by the gradual readjustment of industrial, social, and political conditions between those elements themselves, without outside interference, took shape in several conventions deprecating the policy of Congressional enactments on these matters. One of these assemblies was convened in Cleveland, Ohio, that of the "Soldiers and Sailors" (who having had active share in putting down the rebellion had some opinions to offer about the treatment of the rebels), and invited Mr. Beecher to act as its Chaplain. He could not go, but on August 30, 1866, wrote a letter to the Convention, giving his views on the situation. It became known as "the Cleveland Letter."

After making several points:—no place for a State under our theory of government except in the Union; the increase of complication by every month of delay; the unfitness of the Federal Government to exercise minor police and local restraint; scorn of the fear that the impoverished South would again rule the land if admitted—he gave the following analysis of the position of the freedmen, for whose freedom it must be remembered he had spent the chief power and interest of his whole previous public life.

"The sooner we dismiss from our minds the idea that the freedmen can be classified and separated from the white population, and nursed and defended by themselves, the better it will be for them and us. The negro is part and parcel of Southern society. He cannot be prosperous while it is unprospered. Its evils will rebound upon him. Its happiness and re-invigoration cannot be kept from his participation. The restoration of the South to amicable relations with the North, the re-organization of its industry, the re-inspiration of its enterprise and thrift, will

all redound to the freedman's benefit. Nothing is so dangerous to the freedman as an unsettled state of society in the South. On him comes all the spite, and anger, and caprice, and revenge. He will be made the scapegoat of lawless and heartless men. Unless we turn the Government into a vast military machine, there cannot be armies enough to protect the freedmen while Southern society remains insurrectionary. If Southern society is calmed, settled, and occupied, and soothed with new hopes and prosperous industries, no armies will be needed. Riots will subside, lawless hangers-on will be driven off or better governed, and a way will be gradually opened to the freedmen, through education and industry, to full citizenship, with all its honors and duties. . . .

"If the colored people have the stamina to undergo the hardships which every uncivilized people has undergone in its upward progress, they will in due time take their place among us. That place cannot be bought, nor bequeathed, nor gained by sleight of hand. It will come to sobriety, virtue, industry, and frugality. As the nation cannot be sound until the South is prosperous, so, on the other extreme, a healthy condition of civil society in the South is indispensable to the welfare of the freedmen."

Let any man read that letter; then ponder the demoniac madness developed in the South during the years that followed, when the Ku-Klux Rebellion gradually took form against what the Southerners deemed a wanton intention to humiliate and degrade them, and, increasingly, against the rise of the negroes to political power not only of votes but of office,—the days when the few steadfast and intelligent Unionists of Northern and Southern birth who undertook to guide the movement at the South were overwhelmed by the mass of ignorance and rapacity that took possession of legislatures and governing positions, and who made the name of the "Carpet-Bag Governments" a badge of shameless robbery. Let him then read the second of these "Cleveland Letters," (page 742) addressed by Mr. Beecher to his church, through one of its members, replying to the excited letters and protests that came pouring in upon him from all about,—a letter that reaffirms the first, but with more elaborate reasoning and explanation, and with a distinct repudiation of the absurd violence and "increasing indiscretions" of President Johnson, who

in the mean time had been "swinging round the circle" with wild speeches and almost frantic denunciations of all who took the right of differing from what he called "my policy." Looking at Mr. Beecher's prophetic utterances and their striking verification, the reader must be struck with the clear-eyed foresight of political conditions and after-developments, and also with the masterly quietude of a great man's spirit in the midst of turbulence and peril—not physical danger, but the greater evils of disruption in friendly, social, political, and ecclesiastical ties, that threatened him.

As this point marks real divergence between Mr. Beecher and his party—although he continued to act with them because their aims and general direction were more nearly his own than were those of the other party—it is worth while to bring out a little more clearly his position; not that it is, or was, at all questionable, if men would judge him by his own utterances, but that their partisan blindness made his critics incapable of seeing two sides to a question.

In his second letter Mr. Beecher says (we italicize some phrases):—

"Upon the assembling of Congress [Dec., 1865] I went to Washington. I found *Southern men lying prostrate before Mr. Johnson*, and appealing to his tender-heartedness,—for he is a man of kind and tender heart,—disarming his war-rage by utter submission. I found *Northern men already uttering suspicions* of his fidelity, *and*, conscious of power, *threatening impeachment*. The men who seemed alive to this danger were, unfortunately, not those who had the management of affairs. Bad counsels prevailed. *The North denounced and the South sued: we see the consequences.*

"Long after I despaired of seeing the President and Congress harmonious, I felt it to be the duty of all good men to leave no influences untried to lessen the danger and to diminish the evils which are sure to come should the President, rebounding from the Republicans, be caught by those Northern men who were in sympathy and counsel with the South throughout the war. I shall not attempt to apportion blame where *both sides erred*. It is enough to say that *unity secured at the seat of Government would be a noble achievement of leadership.*

FIRST PAGE, MANUSCRIPT NOTES

OF ADDRESS BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER,

Brooklyn Academy of Music, November 19, 1866, following the publication
of the "Cleveland Letters."

Already Recent History, divides into 3 distinct
Periods -

- I. That of Discussion, and Moral
Awakening.
- II. That of martial Conflict
- III. That of Reconstruction, &
when a fourth is added,
- IV That of Peace Restored Unity &
Peace, - the historic Circle will
be completed.

We are now in the third, & it is the
most important thus far;
What are the Duties of this Period?

"Deeming the speedy admission of the Southern States as necessary to their own health, as indirectly the best policy for the freedmen, as peculiarly needful to the safety of our Government, which, for the sake of accomplishing a good end, incautious men are in danger of perverting, *I favored, and do still favor, the election to Congress of Republicans* who will seek the early admission of the recusant States. *Having urged it for a year past, I was more than ready to urge it again* upon the Representatives to Congress this fall.

"In this spirit and for this end I drew up my Cleveland letter. I deem its views sound; I am not sorry that I wrote it. I regret the misapprehension which it has caused, and yet more any sorrow which it may have needlessly imposed upon dear friends. As I look back upon my course, I see no deviation from the straight line which I have made, without wavering, for now thirty years in public life, in favor of justice, liberty, and the elevation of the poor and ignorant."

And to show how serenely he viewed the whole affair, while hundreds thought him ruined forever because he dared differ from the other opinion-shapers of the party and from the majority of his own friends, this paragraph is apt :—

"The attempt to class me with men whose course I have opposed all my life long will utterly fail. *I shall choose my own place, and shall not be moved from it.* I have been from my youth a firm, unwavering, avowed, and active friend of all that were oppressed. I have done nothing to forfeit that good name which I have earned. *I am not going weakly to turn away from my settled convictions of the public weal for fear that bad men may praise me or good men blame.* There is a serious difference of judgment between men as to the best policy. We must all remit to the future the decision of the question. Facts will soon judge us."

In a private letter written by Mr. Beecher about the time of the foregoing controversy, recently published in the *Christian Union* in its report of a day of "Beecher reminiscences" held this summer (1887) in Litchfield, Connecticut, appears the following:—

"I desire that the constitutional amendments proposed should all be passed, except that of disfranchisement, which I think needless, as Congress has power to reject any who are sent from the South who are disloyal. To oblige the South to disfranchise

their most trusted and honored men is an unnecessary humiliation; and to use the Constitution as a mere criminal law to punish men with, to foist into it provisions to meet a transient exigency, is to set a dangerous example and pervert our fundamental law for no good end. . . . I believe that the great body of the American people of the South, who are honest and have been misled, would have come back with a sense of gratitude for the leniency with which they had been treated. Now, they are in danger of feeling that they have been trodden down by their conquerors."

In corroboration of this forecast read the words of the author of "A Fool's Errand" (written and published in 1879), who certainly will never be charged with an undue partiality for Southern views, but who does show a remarkable power of understanding what he does not accept, and who speaks thus of the disfranchisement of the leaders:—

"Among the peculiarities which marked the difference between Northern and Southern society was one so distinct and evident, one which had been so often illustrated in our political history, that it seems almost impossible that shrewd observers of that history should for a moment have overlooked or underestimated it. This is the influence of family position, social rank, or political prominence. Leadership, in the sense of a blind, unquestioning following of a man, without his being the peculiar exponent of an idea, is a thing almost unknown at the North: at the South it is a power. Every family there has its clientage, its followers, who rally to its lead as quickly, and with almost as unreasoning a faith, as the old Scottish clansmen, summoned by the burning cross. . . .

"It [disfranchisement] was a fatal mistake. The dead leader has always more followers than his living peer. Every henchman of those lordlings at whom this blow was aimed felt it far more keenly than he would if it had lighted on his own cheek. The king of every village was dethroned; the magnate of every cross-roads was degraded. Henceforward, each and every one of their satellites was bound to eternal hostility toward these measures and to all that might result therefrom." . . .

"Time went on; and, twelve years from the day when Lee surrendered under the apple tree at Appomattox, there was another surrender, and the last of the governments organized under the policy of reconstruction fell into the hands of those who had inaugurated and carried on war against the Nation, who had

openly opposed the theory of reconstruction, had persistently denied its legality or the binding nature of its promises, and had finally, with secret, organized violence, suppressed and neutralized the element on which it had depended for support."

In brief, the political power given to the blacks over the heads of the whites resulted, first, in a chaos of misgovernment; then in a new rebellion which annihilated the blacks as a political element, and solidified the whites. When that had been effected, came peace; not instantly but gradually. The blacks, no longer feared, were at first tolerated, then their value as an inseparable element of the community began to tell, and by degrees the natural development of self-interest had its opportunity in solving the question of the common citizenship of the two races.

Now, at the end of twenty years, we can appreciate how the processes which have latterly advanced so far in harmonizing the heterogeneous elements of Southern life (to quote Mr. Beecher's prophetic phrase, "occupation, new hopes, prosperous industries, education,") are at last having their normal effect: not perfectly,—for even the North is not yet in *all* respects perfect in the smooth working of its political, judicial, monetary, industrial, and varied corporate organisms!—but hopefully.

Passing on, then, from this important phase of Mr. Beecher's public ministrations, we may rapidly review the next decade, during which the Congressional scheme of Reconstruction was doing its work, for good and evil, and Mr. Beecher retained his connection with the Republican party, and, with the lapse of conflict (for he never was an "irreconcilable," and despised controversy that had no practical end in fair view), regained his influence in all directions. He had not, in the slightest degree, given any reason to think that he wished to go over to affiliation with the proslavery "Copperhead" Democracy of that time, but he had with might and main striven to hold the Republican party and the President together, and to carry out the restoration of the Union according to the spirit and plan of the lamented Lincoln and that which his own broad mind and generous heart told him was the simpler, safer, speed-

ier way—of consulting the facts of human nature. The effort had failed, by reason of strenuous wills attempered to war and incapable of sudden change to the sagacity of peaceful counsels. He quietly left the arena, and held his peace. He was not one who insisted that his way was the only way: he recognized the patriotism, and ability, and wisdom of the majority of his party's leaders, and, while he felt that they were taking the longest road, he loyally accepted the route chosen and made the best of the good he found in it. In his church his influence had not been seriously shaken. His remarkable power of indignation and even invective, when roused by an infraction of the rights of others, was never used, or even suggested by any expression or phrase, when his own liberty of action was assailed. He had trained his people to independent thought and expression of opinion, and, while his sensibilities were undoubtedly hurt by many intemperate and harsh words from partisans during the heat of the contest, he spoke none himself, but with steady, sweet-tempered dignity kept his hold both on their respect and their love. And after the cloud had passed they felt a little ashamed,—not of their opinions, but of the way in which they had expressed them.

The next of the "Patriotic Addresses" is a discourse on "National Unity," preached in Plymouth Church, Nov. 18, 1869 (Thanksgiving Day). It is a large view of the possibilities of feuds and disintegration in our vast country; discussing the disturbing influences,—immigration, religious sectarianism, long continued physical prosperity, and clashing of commercial interests between various sections (especially Eastern and Western), and also the hopeful elements,—intelligence (and its spread by religious discussion, books, and newspapers), the common-schools (and the need of keeping them free, and especially the growing necessity of making them unsectarian), and a single political agency, the constitutional Rights of the States (to secure wise local administration and maintain the dignity and power of National Sovereignty). It is a noble and most suggestive discourse, and in its discussion of un-

sectarian common-schools, and of the rights of the States, shows a profound knowledge of the Constitution and of the true principles of our Federal government as interpreted since then by the Supreme Court.

In 1868 General Grant had been elected President, entering upon his office in March, 1869, and in 1873 upon his second term. In both the political campaigns of Grant's election, Mr. Beecher took hearty interest and with helpful effect. The nullification of the colored vote at the South resulted in the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, proposed by Congress in 1869 and adopted by the States in March, 1870, providing that the right of suffrage should not be withheld from any citizen of the United States "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Political affairs at the South continued unsettled, but gradually quieted down as the whites regained ascendancy. They seem to have passionately shut their eyes to all consideration of growth in industrial or commercial advancement, and to have retarded their own interests for ten or fifteen years to accomplish that one point. It is incomprehensible to us of the North; yet so it stands.

Meanwhile new dangers were threatening the country. The colossal development of moneyed interests during and since the war had bred an intense spirit not only of enterprise but of speculation throughout the North. Railroad building and all forms of manufacturing and of commerce were feverishly active. "Money" was plentiful, for paper-mills and the Government printing-presses turned out "greenbacks" bearing the name of the Dollar but passing for very much less than the golden reality. Congress, inflamed with the craze of the times, was inclined to perpetuate this baseless monetary system, which had brought such "prosperity;" but Grant courageously vetoed the bill and gave some sensible counsel. In 1873 the bubble burst, in an awful collapse of financial institutions all over the land; and the lesson was a severe one. In 1875 Congress patriotically and wisely passed the Resumption Act, to take effect Jan. 1, 1879, by which the Government was to go back to specie payments. The day

after Grant signed the bill the premium on gold began to diminish (*i. e.*, greenbacks began to appreciate) and, with wise management by the United States Treasury, on the appointed day the premium had disappeared and the Government's promises to pay were worth their face. This was not accomplished without agitation, discussion, wild theories, passionate debate, and organized political resistance: and through it all Mr. Beecher gave his constant influence by pen and tongue in favor of sound currency, and sober restraint of the extravagances, public and private, engendered by the era of speculation.

On Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 30, 1876, he made a "Centennial Review" of the nation's life (page 772), with a philosophic consideration of the effects of the two great wars of our history—the Revolution and the Civil War, and especially the latter, on different portions of the country; and he says:—

"Instead of applying a rigorous ideal moral standard in forming a judgment, let us ask what was to have been expected of our people judged by the tendency of ordinary human nature in such conditions as existed at the end of this war. We shall then be able to judge whether this should be a fast day or a day of thanksgiving."

He says some pretty severe things about both North and South, but his general conclusions are most hopeful. The special topic was the duty of good citizens in the midst of the exciting contested Presidential-election dispute between the supporters of Hayes and of Tilden, the election having been held some weeks previously, and the cries of conflict over the result being then loud and furious. The Republicans charged the Democrats with frauds at the Southern polls, and the Democrats charged the Republicans with fraud in the Southern counting of votes: both claimed the election.

Mr. Beecher firmly declared his belief in the Republican theory of this contest, but his counsel was for peaceful submission of the matter to the legal authorities and an Americanlike acceptance of the decision, whatever it might be.

His historical illustrations and precedents were exceedingly interesting, his patriotic confidence in American institutions was reassuring, and the lofty plane of political morality to which he raised the whole distressing and alarming contest was inspiring to the thousands who heard him and the tens of thousands who read his words. It was a valuable lesson in the principles of civil liberty.

Among the interests that had leaped to enormous prosperity and consequent power during the recent years was that of silver mining. To such an extent had the output of that metal increased that it began to own States and legislatures, and to send its representatives and senators to Congress. It was, properly, looked upon as an interest of great value to the land, but like every other one that by monopoly gathered strength it swelled with selfishness and conceit. Silver was *the* great American product, and the rest of the land and all the nations of the earth must bow down before it. The insanity of attempting to satisfy the European capitalists, who had lent us gold on our bonds and enabled us to put through the war, by repaying them in our depreciated "greenbacks" had passed; and indeed, as the bonds were to be paid in "coin," could not have been seriously proposed to the world. But is not silver-money "coin"? And is it not peculiarly our American coin? So the bloated bondholders should be paid in silver, although the silver dollar could not be exchanged for the gold dollar, even in our own land.

At the crisis when this specious dishonesty was advocated throughout the country, started by selfish monopolists but taken up by feather-brained theorists and managing politicians, Henry Ward Beecher's voice again rang out in warning. His sermon on "Past Perils and the Peril of To-day" (November 29, 1877) will be found at page 789, fitly exposing the dangers of this "suppressed repudiation."

In 1878 occurred at Springfield, Massachusetts, the ninth annual reunion of the "Society of the Army of the Potomac," an association of officers banded together to keep green the memory of "the brave days of old," of gallant

comrades gone, of friendships fused in the heat of war and still sound and vibrant with the true ring; an organization that has never demeaned itself by descending from the plane of patriotism to that of "practical politics." Mr. Beecher was invited to address the Reunion, and his speech will be found at page 809. The value of the services of the army in the trying times of Rebellion gave him a natural point for passing to a consideration of the worth of military training, and the maintenance of military organizations and a regular army among a free people; and especially in this country, where the liberty of discussion is at times likely to degenerate into the violence of riotous reformers and disturbances of the social order. He spoke of the sources of danger in our rapidly increasing population, resources, and political power, the development of machinery, the growth of the means of transportation, the combinations of capital and enormous concentrations of individual and corporate wealth, the relations of money to politics and legislation, the beginnings of the socialistic movements among the working classes coincident with the extraordinary increase of power among the classes who employ them. These and other elements of the immediate future or, as he expressed it, "the next score of years," served as his themes of discourse.

Ten years have passed since he uttered the words, and the reader will find in them a prophetic portrait of our American social, financial, and political condition, as accurate as if made to-day. As General Hooker said, when he was called on for a speech, following it:—

"That address was good enough to last a long time. Study its lessons, and digest them. I doubt if more home truths can be found in any discourse of the same length since the records of this country began."

The next and last phase of Mr. Beecher's political activity that demands our attention is the presidential campaign of 1884. That episode is too near, and its disputed points are still too much questioned, for any one to hope to make an impartial account of it which shall commend itself to partisan readers of either side as fair and candid.

Yet it must be attempted, in justice to the general theme; for, whether Mr. Beecher was wise or unwise in the part he took is aside from our proposition,—namely, that *his career from beginning to end was guided by unselfish principle, and was consistently that of a lover of God and of man.*

Since the Reconstruction wrangle of 1865-6, eighteen years had passed—more than half the life of a generation. The administrations of Johnson, Grant (twice), Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur had successively entered into history. The Southern States were all represented in the National Congress, and, since the years of Ku-Klux and Bulldozer, had gone also those of the “tissue-ballot” and the skillful “count” which quietly but no less effectually maintained a nullification of the Reconstruction governments that had given the blacks the political control. The sight of their harmless voting had become little by little a familiar one, and no longer aroused the old-time horror and detestation; but, inevitably, intelligence ruled ignorance, and their votes gave them but little power. Yet it was a wholesome thing to have the rising generation at the South accustomed to the idea and the fact; it was preparing for the further changes that were to come. The whites were growing out of their unreasoning passion; the blacks were slowly training for real citizenship. Their existence as men, and as free industrial and political factors, was little by little recognized and acted upon.

The philanthropic efforts of Northern givers and teachers were gradually regarded with less suspicion at the South, and the negroes began to be taught and to learn. The necessity for their labor on Southern lands grew not less but greater; and by degrees they were taking their places as fellow-laborers alongside of the whites—who had been forced to learn the bitter lesson, “he that will not work neither shall he eat.” The *leaven of industry* was permeating the entire mass of social order at the South. A new generation was coming up, who had been reared not in luxury but in labor. Brains among the blacks were beginning to assert their power, and not only could there be seen white men and negroes working side by side in

the fields or at bricklaying and carpentering and other trades, but colored bosses had charge of white or mixed groups of laborers, and colored contractors were making money and acquiring property. Common-school education was making headway for both races; and even such exceptional establishments as General Armstrong's Hampton Institute, devoted to the training of negroes and Indians, more and more won and received the kindly appreciation of the Southern people. In a word: the imposed political order having been successfully overthrown by the whites, roused to fury by the insult to their fetich of white supremacy, and their land "redeemed," they had subsided into the condition of ordinary human beings, and the play of normal elements and interests began to have its just effect. As the land grew quiet its splendid natural resources attracted enterprise and capital. Manufactures began to appear and grow; crops were more varied and valuable; the South began to take on new and hopeful conditions.

Through all these years, however, politically, the whites had been almost solidly "Democratic," simply because the negroes and those who represented Reconstructionism were solidly "Republican." All other issues were "pooled" in that one. Of course it was not a healthful political condition, either for the Southern communities or for the nation at large; since, whatever other questions of public policy were before the people—as to tariff, currency, bond-paying, taxation, foreign relations, or what not—all, even when mentioned in the party platforms, were nevertheless relegated to comparative obscurity. The main question at the South was how to defeat the Republican party, that had turned their communities bottom side up; and, at the North, how to maintain in power the Republican party, that had saved the Union, protected the Negro, and successfully reconstructed the Southern States. It was a double case of *fetich*. Each section honestly believed that the rule of the party it opposed meant the country's ruin.

It was the less reasonable, on both sides, because the

Republican party of the Civil War had been largely composed of the loyal men from all shades and names of political partisanship—not only Whigs, but also “Unionists” and “Americans,” “Abolitionists” and “Free-Soilers,” “Douglas Democrats” and “Democrats” out-and-out. After the war, multitudes of these men gradually dropped out of the lines of the Republican organization, as the issues that had united them were passed and settled, and divers side-bodies of partisanship took on various names as different topics—reconstruction, greenbackism, silver, tariff, with the administration of President Hayes a revival of the recurrent temperance reform, etc.—came one by one into view. The two main camps, however, remained “Republican” and “Democratic.” The Republican leaders had been largely men of sound principles in financial morals and philanthropic statesmanship, and this fact had justly maintained their army of voters in a practical majority. Nevertheless, on other issues, the unanimity of the North was dividing; the successful party had necessarily attracted multitudes of shifty politicians “for revenue only;” and the opposition was increasing by defections of opinion.

We have spoken of the changed industrial and educational condition of the South; and in several of Mr. Beecher’s addresses, already mentioned, will be found to have been foreshadowed some new perils that lay before the North and the country at large. These perhaps may all be grouped under the general head of “the love of money,” which in its daily seen effects certainly justifies the wisdom of the inspired writer who said that it was “a root of all evil.”

The enormous prosperity of the North under the unnatural stimulus of the war-fever did undoubtedly breed a “haste to be rich” that was visible in every one of the evils that had to be struggled against—the craze of paper money, the demand for repudiation, the debased silver currency, the oppressive inequities of the war-tariff maintained through decades of peace, the swollen purse-power of corporations, the bribery and corruption of elections

and legislatures and departmental administration. On every side was to be seen the immorality growing out of this change in the money-getting power of the times.

Meantime, the great ship of state was forging ahead and coming into these new waters, vexed by strange winds and moved by currents unnoticed until they had grown potent to swerve the nation's course.

One of the lines of political thought in which Mr. Beecher took a marked interest, although it is not represented in this volume by any single address, was the ultimate ideal of the free exchange of natural and artificial products among nations; so that each one, although limited in certain directions of nature or of art, might be able, by trading for what it could produce, to get the benefit of the fertile soils and brains and well-trained hands of all the others. And, like many thinking men of the Republican party, he looked regretfully upon the fact that the abnormal taxes imposed upon imports during the war, for the expressed purpose of raising unusual revenues, were maintained, at first with apology, but growingly with bold justification and finally even with claim of merit, by the Republican leaders, as giving "protection to American labor" because taxing the entrance of foreign products, and thus tending to keep them out.

But, aside from the general question of this excessive and oppressive tax, although connected with it, many of the Republicans sympathized in dreading a new trouble that had within a few years advanced with giant strides. They feared the demoralizing effect of the surplus revenue of \$100,000,000 which every year piled up in the United States Treasury—a premium on fraudulent and extravagant attempts to get it "distributed to the people again." For, "the people" did not mean those who had unnecessarily paid the tax, but the shrewd or favored ones who could invent ways of spending it, and furnish "channels" which should retain much while distributing the rest.

Star-route mail contracts, fraudulent pension claims by the thousands, payment of unearned railroad-building mileage-allowances, Indian supply contracts—big and

little, the leeches were attracted from every side to fatten on the Treasury surplus.

The party in power was not altogether chargeable with this: it was inevitable that a so long-continued control of vast revenues should breed demoralization and corruption in any party; both because the corrupt would seek it for their own ends, and because human nature is temptable. Men in power want to stay there; and they use the means at hand. It was only by a strenuous effort of reform within the Republican party that this money-getting peril could be purged out of it. That was *the* danger to be fought.

But there was another. The utilization of official station and influence for private purposes, instead of solely for public ends, had become a crying evil. The spoils-theory of office, which regards the places of public servants as the property of the party in power; which makes it the chief business of the higher officials to spend time and influence in providing places for their partisans; which regards not fitness for the duties but efficiency in partisan politics as the qualification for public office, was prevalent. The salaries of officials thus favored by party leaders were taxed to furnish means for continuing those leaders in power; favoritism was seen to be advancing not only in executive but even in legislative cliques, making public laws for private profit in the sacred name of party, and by natural degradation stepping down even from that low plane to the still lower one of using the influence of official station for the personal pecuniary gain of the officers themselves. Thus the spoils-theory of office was inextricably entangled, indeed, systematically reticulated, with the money-getting spirit of the time.

These evils were broadly recognized in both parties by thinking men and moral teachers, but the chief illustrations in the Federal service were necessarily furnished by the party in power at Washington. Demoralization was not seen at Washington alone, it was wide-spread. As Mr. Beecher said in one of his sermons: "If you send a rogue to Albany to represent you, he *does* represent you." It was

not confined to politics alone; embezzlements, defalcations, breaches of trust, showed an infection throughout the business world. Yet Federal politics offered the opportunity of dealing with the trouble in an organized form. The question arose: How can the wrong tendency be righted? The "ins" naturally said, "It is a mere matter of position; if the 'outs' ever get in they will do the same." And thus there arose within the Republican party a strong movement to commit the party, by its declaration of principles and by the presidential candidate it should offer as its representative, to a marked divergence from the recognized extremes towards which the current of the times, running in well-worn and insensibly deepening channels, had borne the responsible government. A reform of the tariff inequalities and infelicities, a reform of the theory and practice of the appointment to positions in the civil service: these were the two points that many Republicans hoped to see gained in the public commitments of the party. And they had the more hope, because in response to the demand of public opinion something had been begun. A committee, appointed by a Republican Congress, had publicly examined the tariff by the aid of expert witnesses from all parts of the country, and had recommended a considerable reduction of the import taxes. True, the Congress did not find it practicable to unite all interests sufficiently to effect the committee's recommendation, but the public demand had been recognized and the reform might be brought about. The civil service movement was in like hopeful but doubtful condition. The reform had been so urgently demanded by public opinion that laws had been passed to compass that end; but practically the spirit of the law was not in favor among the influential leaders of the party in power; and the "outs" of course, as always, had the "ins" as their ever-present text of moral discourse.

The Republican Convention of June, 1884, made fair enough promises on the critical points of public policy. The main thing, then, was the probability of reform as embodied in the Presidential candidate. Mr. James G. Blaine, the candidate named by the Convention, was not

accepted by those members of the party who had been publicly identified with the movements for reform as satisfactory to their convictions of what the party and the country needed.

The Democratic party held its convention about a month later, in July; and while its platform, like the other, consisted largely in denunciations of the opposing party, its declarations on the subject of tariff reform and the civil service, honest money, restrictions of the power of corporations, etc., were much the same as those of the Republicans. Both parties in their declarations recognized the popular cry for reform, but both kept a wary eye on the influence of vested interests.

So that the question in this case as in the other became a personal one:—Who and what will be their candidate? The man they nominated, Grover Cleveland, a reputable lawyer of Buffalo, New York, had won his way by a peculiarly honest and honorable and single-hearted devotion to his public duties, from the shrievalty of his county to the position of mayor of the city of Buffalo; and from that to the station of governor of the great State of New York. He was known as “the reform Governor;” as such he had been elected, and as such he had admirably filled the place. His creed and practice seemed to be summed up in his own felicitous phrase: “Public office is a public trust.”

Mr. Cleveland was accepted by his own party (although the worst elements of it, typified by Tammany Hall of New York, urgently opposed his nomination, and, as many believe, worked against his election); and his record made him acceptable to the Independent Republicans, who, not seeing present encouragement for reform within their party, stepped outside of it as their best hope. They believed that even a temporary loss of power would be better for the Republican party than the feared continuance in the discredited methods.

Mr. Beecher was one of these. He was now an old man—seventy-one years of age; but his eye was undimmed (it is a curious fact that to the day of his death he never needed the aid of glasses, for private or public reading) and

his natural force of eloquence, though ripened, mellowed, softened, was not abated. He went into the campaign, not in his old-time tremendous fashion, for the issues were not those of human slavery and the rights of man ; but at the same time he took his position unmistakably, and with power.

The party fetich, however, was the most potent influence evoked by the Republicans. The campaign was one of unparalleled personal bitterness and cruel vilification, which need not be recalled. This, with the childish dread of many, that, if the Republican party was thrown out of power, the country would fly to dismemberment, its industries be sapped, its trade ruined, its commerce wrecked ; and that if the Democratic party should come in, the negroes would all be remanded to slavery, the rebel debt paid, the pensions to Union soldiers disallowed, free trade immediately inaugurated, and all the forces of the infernal regions incontinently set loose, did much to check the reform-within-the-party feeling that had resulted in the Independent Republican schism.

Plymouth Church had never been trained by Mr. Beecher to accept him as pope. He had ruled there by the law of love; the authority conferred by his position he never exercised, but his influence was very powerful; his opinions were often combated by his parishioners, and he encouraged them to speak their minds. This had been one secret of the solidarity of that great membership of two thousand, in matters concerning him and his wishes. It was essentially a Congregational—that is, a democratic—community. On the question of breaking off, even temporarily and for any reason, from the Republican party, a large number of the members rebelled against Mr. Beecher's position, and when he took active part in the campaign were vehemently excited, opposing him not only in private but in public, and some even, as in 1866, with bitterness.

Yet he, firm in the consciousness of right motives, stood strong in the conviction of his opinions. Knowing well that this great land was never made and would never be unmade by any political party; seeing the issues of the

day practically narrowed to that of a choice between two men—one of whom he believed to be the likelier to influence a carrying out of the promises made by both parties; feeling that it would be more wholesome for the country at large, and even for the Republican party itself, to have a shifting of powers and responsibilities—a “change for the sake of change;” and, with it all, urgently desirous to see a closing of the old war-sores, and a chance for the reconstructed South to share freely in administering the government of a common country, and the introduction of new issues which should split up the voters of the South on some other lines than the old and irritating ones of “Rebels” and “Republicans,”—he stood sturdily where he had placed himself. He made a few speeches, basing his arguments chiefly on the tendencies of the times and the comparative relations of the personal qualities of the candidates to those tendencies; and his influence was very great, especially among the young men of his own city and the business men of the great metropolis, who had for so many years seen him on the noble and manly side of every great controversy of the past. When it was all over, and the Republican party had lost the election, one of the most brilliant and effective Republican workers in Plymouth Church said: “It cut me to the soul that he was so wrong; but when it comes to denying his influence, that is simply absurd. We never worked so hard in our lives as we did to counteract him in this thing; but the effect of his personality and his power was evident on every side.”

In November, 1884, on Thanksgiving Day, two weeks after the elections were closed, he preached in Plymouth Church a discourse entitled “Retrospect and Prospect” (page 825), taking, as was his custom for that national festival, the land we live in, as his theme.

The general discourse is a review of the growth of the land in the blessings of liberty; the war and its consequences are briefly touched upon, and then he generously commends the wisdom shown by the political leaders when the war was past and on the people was rolled the difficult

duty of reconstructing, without experiment or precedent, the shattered fragments of the sixteen Southern States. The commendation is "generous," because it recognizes the value of a course which at the time he opposed in certain of its notable features. Among other things he says:—

"The work was inherently difficult; and I think that while those to whose hands it was committed were not free from mistakes, yet they have builded well; and their names are part and parcel of American history. . . . There were great difficulties; human nature would not be what human nature is if there had not been. There were many imprudent things done, North and South. Nevertheless, we have waited patiently and courageously until time should help; for time is God's minister of mercy. . . .

"Then we have had patience given us, too, to redeem, on our side, the swollen values of the distemping war. We have had grace and conscience given us to redeem our finances and to bring back honestly within their bounds the issues of currency, and have settled business on normal and solid foundations. . . .

"But one thing more was needed, and that was to chase the scowl from the Southern brow; to revive the old friendship; to clasp hands again in a vow of loving and patriotic zeal. It was given to us last, because it is the greatest of God's gifts. . . .

"From the bottom of my soul, I believe in the honor and integrity of thoughtful Southern men; and when I get from them such letters as I do, and hear from their lips such declarations as I hear, that they feel at last that they are in and of the Union, as much as we, and point to the flag, declaring, with tears, 'That is now my flag,' I believe it; I should be faithless to God and to providence if I did not.

"Not the least joyful element in this reconciliation is the assured safety and benefit which will accrue to the colored race. That has come to pass which was their only safety. Just as soon as the Southern statesmen accept the perfect restoration of themselves to the great body politic, and find that there is no division as between Northern men and Southern men in any of the honors of government; just as soon as they are in, and a part of every administration, as, thank God, they will be; just so soon of necessity that will take place which is the salvation of the colored race. As long as they were a fringe upon a Northern

party, the South was condensed and solidified against it. As soon as they are divided at home between the administrative party and the opposition party, they will be guarded and taken care of. . . . I regard this now, with schools and academies and various seminaries spread among them, as the final step of emancipation.

"It is in these views, which have not been accepted with sympathy by some of the dearest friends I have, that I have acted in the recent campaign; and in the calmest retrospect I now rejoice that I was able to act so.

"The greatest mistake of my life has happened twice, as I have been informed. I propose this morning now to read a portion of the letters that were the first "greatest mistake of my life." That was immediately after the war, in the autumn of 1866.

"I read it now that you may see how straight a line has run, from the very days of the war down to this hour, in my thought, philosophy, and action."

Mr. Beecher then read portions of his two Cleveland letters of 1866, on the Reconstruction of the Southern States (page 736), showing his view that, not by imposition from without but only by the natural development of mutual and common interests between the two races—"the long result of time"—could white and black be brought to live and work harmoniously together. And he concluded thus:—

"My dear friends, if I had written that for to-day I could not have written it better, and I do not think it needs to be written any better. . . . And I have read these letters, in parts, so far as bears more immediately on questions of to-day, that you may know that God gave me the light to do one of the best things I ever did when I wrote that letter; and that he gave me the grace to stand on it, without turning back for one single moment; and that he has given me grace to lay my path, by sight, along those two letters—hindsight and foresight—from that day down to this; and that he has given me grace to withstand the impleadings of those that I love dearly, not only of my immediate household, but of my blood and kindred; of those that are in the church, that are to me as my own life, and those that are of the political party with which I have labored thus far.

"Still seeing that luminous light, as God reveals it to me, I have walked in it and toward it; and abide in that same direction to-day; and, God helping me, so will I live to the end."

Mr. Beecher's wisdom, in all the eventful passages of his life, will probably always find men of his own generation to question it; because they thought, and doubtless still think, differently. But the clear-eyed honesty of his convictions; the utter lack of self-consideration or ambition, or any unworthy motive; the broad consistency and general sagacity of his views, based on the laws of God as wrought out in human nature—whether displayed in personal or social or political developments; and his singleness of mind and devotion to his principles,—cannot be candidly denied or doubted. Those qualities were the source of his long-continued and extraordinary influence in the political life of his time. And there are multitudes who can now look back and see how history has justified him in withstanding the current political passions of his day—as to slavery, compromise, disunion, peace and war, the mutual relations of blacks and whites at the South, repudiation and national credit, sound and debased currency, the peaceful settlement of contested elections, and numberless other matters, wherein his counsel had always been freely given. He thought about everything in the light of God's truth and man's benefit, and withheld nothing of his thought, but courageously spoke it out and stood to it.

How far he was right and how far wrong in his hopes and aims of 1884, to see the present perils of the land guarded against by a change, even if temporary, of the party in power and under responsibility, only the future can tell. We who are yet in the turmoil of the contest are too near to judge. He did live to see the substantial assurance of every other great principle that he had worked for; but the latest issue arose too near the end of his life. Yet experience had taught him patience; and patience, hope; and, although he died without the sight, his faith was strong in the self-cleansing and recuperative power of the American people, and in God's guiding hand. The contest over "Prohibition" is already dividing the colored vote in the far South between the two parties. As their manufacturing interests grow, the opposing cries of "Pro-

tection" and "Revenue Tariff" will bring in another splitting wedge. And thus, in spite of remnants of barbarism like the "Glenn bill" of Georgia, making it a crime to educate white and negro children together, and other evidences of the stubborn race-prejudice (which shows at the North as really as at the South), the great revolution is on the march, and will not go backward. His faith in that regard will be justified and his large wisdom will be recognized.

The final address given in this volume is Mr. Beecher's "Eulogy of Grant" (page 840), which was delivered in Tremont Temple, Boston, October 22, 1885, about two months after the death of that great man. It is dignified, strong, impressive, containing noble tributes to the hero and eloquently enforced lessons from the history in which he bore so large a part.

In one of his addresses is a paragraph concerning Grant, which may well be placed here at the close of this imperfect review of Mr. Beecher's political career, a fit summary of his own future memory on earth:—

"As I recede, along the adjoining fields of Jersey, from the great city, I speedily lose sight of the masts, of the warehouses, and of the spires themselves; and yet, when I have gone so far that the last glimmer of these things is lost, the towers of the Brooklyn Bridge stand full and high in the air, conspicuous. As time goes on we shall forget that which called down such a storm of fury upon his name; and when all incidental and collateral things have gone below the horizon, his name and just fame will stand towering high in the air, unobscured and imperishable!"

VI.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

ONE of the aptest things said about Mr. Beecher since his death occurs in an article published in the *Christian Union*, by Dr. R. W. Raymond, who had known him intimately for many years. Writing of his peculiar sincerity of character, Dr. Raymond says:—

“Certainly, I never met another man who was so entirely the same in public and in private. . . . It is often said, by those who fancy themselves critics, that he was a great actor. In the most important sense this is not only not true, it is the exact opposite of truth. He could not dissemble. He could not give force of expression to a feeling which was not with equal force dominant for the time within him.”

This trait is the complement of the one noted in our first chapter (page 11) as the chief element of the man's life—his sensitiveness to truth. To prevaricate, to give a shifty, double-sensed answer, was something that in forty years of acquaintance and twenty of close personal, literary, and business association with him, as his publisher, I never knew him to do: nor do I believe it was possible for him.* He could be silent; no man more utterly so. And at times, when pursued by questions that he did not wish to answer, he would pass into silence, not only, but an impassibility of countenance that gave no more sign of understanding or of response than the face of the Sphinx. When he spoke at all, in public or in private, he spoke the truth, as it was given to him to see the truth.

* In this chapter it will occasionally be simpler and more fitting for the writer to speak in his own person, as the material is, to some extent, in the nature of personal testimony.



Henry Wood Beecher

This was so characteristic that it could be seen throughout his life—in every element and phase. It is the explanation of many puzzling things. When Bismarck first appeared in European diplomacy, he baffled all the trained diplomats of the day by the simple device of speaking the truth, for they, never supposing that any man in power would plainly disclose his real intentions, calculated on the opposite, or on some variation, and deceived themselves. It is in much the same way that Henry Ward Beecher—not from shrewd forecast, but by natural impulse and determinate principle a truth-lover and truth-speaker—has been an enigma to many, who, seeing a man pre-eminent in so many other directions, have judged his truthfulness, at times, not by his own sincere utterances, but by their observations of average humanity.

And yet no one of them will say that he was otherwise on the level of ordinary men. They will recognize his greatness of intellect, of imagination, of heart, of physical power, and of that indefinable but very positive gift which they call eloquence, and which is a resultant of all the other gifts; yet so weak is their faith that they cannot conceive of a man having all this and the crowning graces of moral and spiritual steadfastness besides. What, however, was the realm in which he lived and moved, and to which he devoted all his strength? What was the one thing that underlay his every utterance? It was *the elevation of human life above the physical and temporal, to the higher plane of the moral and spiritual*; and the testimony of many who knew his daily "walk and conversation," in matters both small and great, is that he was to a rare degree one who practiced what he preached. Except in certain noted matters wherein his own interests were deeply involved, his sincerity was never doubted; yet just there is where he should receive the benefit of "good character." For when to the aim of fifty years of effort, open and known to all men, is added the central, unmistakable characteristic of truthfulness, it stands to reason that the words of such a man are to be received as realities.

In fact, his words were realities, to him, in a sense far

more actual than most men can comprehend. So instantaneous and forcible were his processes of thought, so thorough were his convictions, so vivid were the conceptions of his mind and the analogies and similes with which his imagination flashed them upon the perception of his hearers, that they took place in him as *experiences*, rather than as the mere results of intellection. When he was preparing for a public occasion he avoided any clear formulation of his material until the time was almost at hand, because it was so difficult for him to follow a second time over a line of thought once taken. If I may repeat a portion of what I contributed to a chapter of *Reminiscences* in Abbott and Halliday's "Life" of him, a remark he made just previous to beginning his third series of "Yale Lectures on Preaching" will be apt, here. The series was to be on "Methods of Using Christian Doctrines," and the day before he was to go to New Haven I asked him: "Do you know pretty nearly the line of treatment you mean to take?"—for it was a difficult and critical task, and he dreaded it.

"Yes; in a way," he answered. "I know what I am going to aim at, but of course I don't get down to anything specific. I brood it, and ponder it, and dream over it, and pick up information about one point and another, but if ever I *think* I see the plan opening up to me I don't dare to look at it or put it down on paper. If I once write a thing out, it is almost impossible for me to kindle up to it again. I never dare, nowadays, to write out a sermon during the week; that is sure to kill it. I have to think around and about it, get it generally ready, and then *fuse it* when the time comes."

This every one knew who was familiar with the difficulty he always had in correcting for the press what he had spoken, when it had been reported and put in type; and even what he had written. The matter under revision was no longer in process of making, to be perfected and corrected, but was a thing done, and had become an outside fact, simply suggestive of new ideas. The original production ran great risk of being overrun with new

growth; every joint pushed forth a fresh bud of vital expansion. Hence, he rarely undertook to see his speeches or lectures or sermons after their delivery, until they came to him printed and published.

Nor was this the case with his public utterances alone. The thought that arose, if not suppressed altogether, was apt to find instant and forceful expression. He was quite as likely to burst out into splendid eloquence amid a small group of chatting friends, or even to a single listener, as before a vast audience,—not Macaulay-like, in artificial fireworks, but with the spontaneity and friendly glow of a great mass of cannel coal at the home fireside.

He was moved by his own inner forces. One would as soon suspect the Atlantic of holding back a particularly grand roll of surf at Long Branch until people should come down to see it, as to imagine Mr. Beecher “keeping” a fine thought or a striking figure till he had an audience. It was not that he despised careful preparation for public speech, since his whole life was a constant gathering,—a patient, painstaking, studious reading of books, and of men, individually and socially; a storing of his mind with multitudinous information and the results of other men’s thought and discovery. But all this entered into his own mind and became an indivisible part of himself; and when, in talk or in conversation or in public speech, an idea came up for expression, it laid hold of him with power, as a real thing; and it was this, together with his natural gifts and cultivated modes of utterance, that made such strong impression on others.

It is important to have this fact, of the native and habitual outspeaking sincerity of the man, thoroughly stated; for on it stands his life. And by way of emphasizing what I have called the “reality” of his thoughts, to himself, it will perhaps be worth while to claim and restate here another personal reminiscence, which I have several times seen in print, although I never put it there.

It was at the close of one of his patriotic Thanksgiving Day sermons that, after raising his hearers with him to a noble elevation of thought and sentiment, he closed with

an apostrophe to Liberty, whose radiant face and form he described in dazzling eloquence. A day or two later I chanced to be where he was, in a family circle, and as he was weary he had thrown himself down on the sofa. We were speaking of a report of the sermon in one of the papers: "But," said he, "how stupid of the reporter to make that a diamond-studded scepter! It was a *diamond scepter*—one flashing crystal."

"Now, Mr. Beecher, that's not likely. Whoever knew of such a thing? Besides, the phonographer probably wrote just what he heard, and it is my recollection that you *said* 'diamond-studded.'"

With one bound he was on his feet. "I don't know what I *said*, but I know what I *saw*." And then with earnestness and increasing intensity as he was rekindled by the remembrance, which seemed to have been an unusually vivid one, he went on and told how it came about, what had been the foregoing thought, and how, suddenly, the vision shone upon him, and what it was. From that time I never doubted that he did actually see—that his imagination did really "body forth"—the forms of things unknown, and of known things not present to the bodily eye.

There is another such reminiscence,—not so poetical or striking as to the vision, but perhaps even more to the point under discussion.

In another of his sermons on Thanksgiving Day Mr. Beecher was describing an imaginary interview between a ship-owner of kindly Christian feeling and an old sailor on one of his ships in port, which the merchant had gone to look at. He indicated the superior's frank and friendly way of speaking, and then the old sailor raised himself slowly up from his work to reply. Mr. Beecher never used tobacco; I doubt if he ever tasted it; but, in the person of the old sailor, he rolled his tongue around in his cheek, put up his hand, and, to clear his mouth for talking, unmistakably made the movement of taking out of it a large cud, and went on with his reply. The conversation proceeded for perhaps a minute. Mr. Beecher's right hand meanwhile had dropped

to his side, but it was closed, as if holding something. When finally he spoke of the merchant pleasantly offering his right hand to say good-by, *the sailor's closed right hand furtively threw away something behind him, was wiped off on the back of his trousers, and then* held out to receive the gentleman's farewell. I had watched the hand, believing that the orator all the while unconsciously felt the "moist unpleasant body" of the sailor's cud, and was proportionately amused to see him throw it away and wipe his hand sailor-fashion before taking the other's proffered palm. The experience was a *reality* to the man who was describing it.

When I afterwards asked Mr. Beecher about it he was immensely tickled with the comicality of the thing, but had no recollection of the minor details at all. What he was after was the illustration of his subject; the special mode of doing it was something he gave no thought to. And, indeed, the action was so quiet and unnoticeable that it could not have been an intentional part of the picture, and I doubt if it was seen by the audience at all.

But, it may be objected, this is not moral sincerity. No; yet it shows the native temper and habit of the mind, which has much to do with moral developments of every kind. And that tendency, to speak the things that were himself, may be found—nay, it is one of the most obvious qualities noticeable—in all his multifarious teachings. Says Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes:—*

"The way a man handles his egoisms is a test of his mastery over an audience or a class of readers. What we want to know about the person who is to counsel or lead us is, just what he is, and nobody can tell us so well as he himself. . . . Mr. Beecher has the simple frankness of a man who feels himself to be perfectly sound, in bodily, mental, and moral structure; and his self-revelation is a thousand times nobler than the assumed impersonality which is a common trick with cunning speakers who never forget their own interests. Thus it is that wherever Mr. Beecher goes, everybody feels, after he has addressed them once or twice, that they know him well, almost as if they had always known him; and there is not a man in the land who has such a multitude who look upon him as their brother."

* "The Minister Plenipotentiary," page 422.

In the "Beecher-Memorial" volume, compiled and published by Mr. Edward W. Bok, among other interesting contemporary tributes to Mr. Beecher's qualities, is one from Dr. William A. Hammond. Referring to Mr. Beecher's speech at the dinner given to Herbert Spencer when in New York, he says:—

"I shall never forget the effect which his ringing words produced upon an audience, composed as it was, of hard-headed men who were not accustomed to be swayed by their emotions. They rose to their feet, waved their table-napkins, and shouted themselves hoarse, not because they all approved the views which he then revealed to them, but because of the astounding courage, the wonderful regard for the truth as he understood it, and the almost superhuman honesty by which he must have been actuated."

It was this very sincerity of self-revelation, and the further fact that there was a self worthy to be revealed, that was his strength. To quote Dr. Storrs again: "His power has been so constant and so vast only because the sources of it have been so manifold and so deep."

This same outspoken fashion of his, however, was also a source of weakness, in that it sometimes led him into headlong leaps of feeling and over strenuous or inaccurate statements. In his address to the New York and Brooklyn Association of Ministers and Churches, October 11, 1882, when he resigned his connection with that body in order that neither the Association nor any of its members should feel oppressed by the sense of any responsibility for his religious teachings, he said:—

"I have my own peculiar temperament; I have my own method of preaching; and my method and temperament necessitate errors. I am not worthy to be related in the hundred-thousandth degree to those more happy men who never make a mistake in the pulpit. I make a great many. I am impetuous. I am intense at times on subjects that deeply move me. I feel as though all the ocean were not strong enough to be the power behind my words, nor all the thunders in the heavens; and it is of necessity that such a nature should at times give such intensity to parts of doctrine as to exaggerate them when you come to bring them into connection with a more rounded and balanced

view. I know it. I know it as well as you do. I would not do this if I could help it; but there are times when it is not I that is talking; when I am caught up and carried away so that I know not whether I am in the body or out of the body; when I think things in the pulpit that I could never think in the study, and when I have feelings that are so far different from any that belong to the lower or normal condition that I can neither regulate them nor understand them. I see things, and I hear sounds, and seem, if not in the seventh heaven, yet in a condition that leads me to apprehend what Paul said,—that he heard things which it was not possible for a man to utter.

“I am acting under such a temperament as that. I have got to use it, or not preach at all. I know very well I do not give crystalline nor thoroughly guarded views. There is often an error on this side and on that; but I cannot stop to correct them. . . . The average and general influence of a man's teaching will be more mighty than any single misconception, or misapprehension through misconception.

The Association would seem to have agreed with that final assertion, for after the long and full statement of his beliefs and teachings, which he proceeded to make, they passed without a dissenting voice a resolution, recognizing his magnanimity in wishing to relieve his fellows in the Association of even apparent responsibility, but declaring that his exposition of doctrinal views “indicates the propriety of his continued membership in this or any other Congregational Association,” requesting him to withdraw his resignation, and finally saying:—

“We desire to place on record, as the result of a long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Beecher, a familiar observation of the results of his life, as well as his preaching and pastoral work, that we cherish for him an ever-growing personal attachment as a brother beloved and a deepening sense of his worth as a Christian minister.”

Our point here, however, is that whether in public or in private, whether in quiet moods, or under the stimulus of a keen interest, or on the sweep and swing of a mighty wave of feeling, he was always natural, always himself, always giving forth his own interior condition, honestly and frankly; and those who knew him longest came by experience to know the truthfulness of his words.

This is especially noticeable in his letters, whether to friends, acquaintances, or strangers. With a strong sense upon him of an unwillingness to read manuscript and an impatience of pen-work, he was nevertheless a voluminous correspondent, and wrote innumerable letters, notes, scraps of memoranda, questions, answers, instructions,—every conceivable size and style of epistolary communication to all sorts and conditions of men. A collection of his letters would be a mountain of ore-veins, with many a bonanza-chimney of pure precious metal; sense and trifling nonsense, fun and broad-based wisdom, affectionate and poetic sentiment, tender sympathy in trouble, the noblest spirituality—the man himself. Mr. Joseph Howard, Jr., in his graphic and characteristic “Life” of Mr. Beecher, says:—

“Years hence, when the ultimate biographer and collector shall have received from all sources, at home and abroad, the multitudinous trifles which go to make the comprehensive whole, far from the least of these illustrations of the greatness and goodness, the weakness and the uniqueness of Mr. Beecher’s character will be found in letters, sent here and there, dashed off with the rapidity of friendly utterance, or penned with care and thought as to their effect. . . . Elsewhere in this volume will be found letters written during a period of forty years to his most intimate friends. . . . They are packed with sentiment. They give evidence of his extraordinary and peculiar vocabulary, and are brightly garlanded with choice illustrations drawn from the heavens, from the earth, from the verdure-clad fields, from the golden granaries of the West, from the heart of society, from the progress of art and science, from everything which human nature teaches, showing that it was his constant habit so to think and so to write. . . . His letters are no more like those written by ordinary men than he was like ordinary men.”

The circle that furnished the letters to which Mr. Howard alludes could doubtless furnish many more, and so could every group of heart-friends that in his long and loving life Mr. Beecher drew to himself; so, too, could lawyers, statesmen, politicians, business associates, ecclesiastical friends (and opponents), editors, young men that he helped, strangers who addressed him,—there was no limit to the varieties of humanity to whom he wrote, for

one reason and another. And the "infinite riches" of his nature could be gathered from these writings quite as effectively, if not as completely, as from his public ministrations. They are all characteristically frank; and while naturally his exuberant sentiment and affection found most outplay towards his nearest friends, many a distant correspondent has been surprised and delighted to get so much more of the man himself in a felicitous mood than had been hoped, when addressing him.

In tracing the trait of sincerity in Mr. Beecher's character, there is one point more that requires mention: his trustfulness in friendship. In his "Eulogy of Grant," the orator says:—

"Such was his loyalty to friendship that it must be set down as a fault—a fault rarely found among public men."

This remark may be applied to Mr. Beecher himself,—except that the evils flowing from his loyal belief in friends never led him into errors of principle whereby the interests of the public suffered. He himself took the chief injury. It is true, there were occasions when his confidence in the disinterestedness and judgment of some friends resulted in unjust conclusions bearing upon others; but they were candid mistakes, amid complicated currents, at times when he felt the need of experienced and unbiassed counsel and believed that he had found it. When an idea took possession of him he held it tenaciously, and in the face of opposition would sometimes forward it with tremendous force (under pressure of that human faculty which he himself has happily described somewhere as a "conceited conscience"). Yet he was not a stubborn man; and when fairly convinced of error he was no laggard in acknowledging it. A patent fact in his career was that in the realm of personal friendship his powerful affection for others—and especially for any whom he could help—drew him into confidence in the sincere love for him of those whom he loved. The honest strength of his own feeling sometimes blurred his sight, when the feelings of others towards him were to be discriminated. It sprang from his own open and sincere nature. The special instances

of this trait which plunged him into the deep and awful trouble of his life need no specification here. They are but too well known.

It presents an anomaly; yet the fact stands: Mr. Beecher's knowledge and intuitions of human nature as shown in his published works would seem to be almost unrivaled, since the day of the master-dramatist who stands above comparison; while yet his judgment in the cases of actual persons was at times egregiously wrong.

His remarkable knowledge of man's nature was based on incessant observation and study of men's actions and motives, the results of which were shot through with the light of his marvelous imagination and warmed into life by his human sympathy, enabling him to vitally realize what must be the consciousness of others—to think their thoughts, and feel their sensations, and be moved by their emotions. But there was a force in him greater than knowledge, loftier than imagination, more potent than generic human sympathy: it was the constant outreaching of an affectionate heart for personal friendship. Freely he received, throughout his life; for who could resist or ignore the friendliness of so rich, so noble a nature? And, as he received, so and much more freely did he give, bounteously, unreservedly. Nothing pleased him so much as the power to please or serve a friend,—unless it was a chance to do a good turn for an enemy.

Yet it is not to be supposed that he gave his friendship without just cause. Among the thousands who felt his personal influence and who bore to him an enduring personal affection, the members of Plymouth Church showed that their friendship was of the lasting kind, while of those who at one time and another became intimate with him, the element of constancy was lacking in but a pitiful few. The roll would be seen to contain many noble and honored names, with others quite as worthy if less known. He was attracted by beautiful and generous qualities, and instinctively repelled by low and mean ones. Of the two false friends who raised the cloud of suspicion that cast so black a shadow on his life, one had been a youth of noble promise

who had grown to maturity under his fostering kindness and loving care, and who in early manhood showed many winning and admirable qualities; while the other, frank and attractive in demeanor, intelligent and interesting in conversation, came to him in an hour of desperation, professing indeed to be moved by loyalty to his opponent, but winning his confidence by free protestations of belief in him, and offers to undertake the generous office of "mutual friend."

Complaint has been made concerning Mr. Beecher, that he had the "royal trait" of accepting not only homage but service and sacrifice, as no more than his due, and that he was negligent of homely obligations. This is true; but it is only half the truth. A man of many and important functions, he was under large responsibilities, which needed both service and sacrifice from many helpers. In the great Congregational Council of February, 1876,—the largest in the history of the denomination,—which assembled to consider (and resulted in practically sustaining) the propriety of the rules and practice of the disciplinary polity of Plymouth Church, the fact was brought out that the membership of that church was something over two thousand five hundred; and that when the whole church work was considered, its parish of families, its own immense Sunday-school, its Bethel and Mayflower Mission schools, etc., it was seen to be the center of from 12,000 to 15,000 persons, looking to it for instruction, for consolation, for moral direction. That would be enough for almost any man to carry on his soul. Yet Mr. Beecher's duties, as a sort of central heart to supply and circulate spiritual life-blood, were not limited by these thousands, although their needs were the nearest and the most conscious. There were demands upon him from every side—his neighborhood, his city, his friends, various literary and business enterprises, political questions and questioners, public lectures in all parts of the land, and other things that will suggest themselves to those who knew his life; not to mention the army of the poor, the sick, the afflicted, the unfortunate, the importunate, the inconsiderate, the asinine, with all of whom and of which his patience was tire-

less and his activity endless, for good. True, as he once said to a hostile audience delaying him in his speech, "We have all the time there is;" but even that did not suffice for the calls upon him; he had to work largely through others. And as all who worked with him and under him felt his inspiration, they gladly gave him service and sacrifice; and he, unconsciously, but most naturally and correctly, identifying himself with his work, did doubtless accept this as no more than his due.

There were times when this went too far; when—especially under the influence of others who, more facile than he in the special matters under consideration, changed the relative focus of things in his sight—he failed to appreciate the position and just rights of some of these co-laborers with him. Yet as one who knew much of his way for many years, I wish to record my belief—arrived at not by impulse or through mere personal affection—that he was never consciously unjust, but that on the contrary he would far rather suffer than inflict injury. During twenty years of intimate work with him, while there were often passages of perplexity and even severe trials of the relations between us, I never received from him one impatient or unkind word. And not only so, but I think it safe to say that during all those years I never heard from him an irritable or harsh expression about other people (except in that playful extravagance which robbed it of its sting), even concerning those who were most unfaithful and venomous toward him.

He was not perfect; and he would have been the first to laugh at such a claim for him. His intentness on one thing would often cause him to forget another thing which people were justly expecting; he was unmethodical, and hard to work with because he could not be counted upon as a sure element at the time needed; his modes of work increasingly depended upon his moods of spirit and of body; he moved over so large a field and was a part of so many groups and interests and movements that some of them at times suffered sorely: yet, he did his best. Perhaps he undertook too much.

His weak point was always his sympathetic nature as regarded persons. His courage never failed, except when it was necessary to do something that would displease or grieve or afflict a friend; and then he was cowardly—there is no other word for it. Sometimes in church affairs, sometimes in business matters, a certain line of action would be decided on in consultation which would displace or disappoint some one for whom he had a strong affection, even perhaps on whom he had especially leaned; and if it was arranged that he should convey the decision to the knowledge of the party interested, he would postpone it, avoid it from day to day—until at length the crisis was at hand, and he either left the circumstance to make itself known, or took refuge from the personal complication in a stern setting forth of the necessities that had compelled the decision. That this was a kind of moral cowardice, no candid friend of his can deny. In several instances it resulted in the keenest distress and indignation on the part of the friend whom he could not bear to wound, but who was, even thereby, the more sorely bruised.

It was somewhat the same in cases of bereavement, although less so because he was not in any way responsible for the personal suffering. He would shrink like a girl from announcing to a friend the death of a dear one; yet, even in the most painful circumstances, when the duty was brought before him of comforting the afflicted at the time of burial, he quietly and strongly grasped the situation, and the power of his uplifting spirit was wonderful. Perhaps it was because the very publicity of such occasions divested them somewhat of the personal element, and brought them upon that ideal or generic plane of human nature, which was so familiar to his ken, and his subtle sympathy with which, on the other hand, made individuals so responsive to his touch.

There certainly seems to have been some such underlying cause for the coupling of his almost unflinching knowledge, wisdom, and courage, when things were to be considered on the broad ground of general principles,

with his occasional lack of poise and correct character-reading where individual friends were concerned. The latter, however, although a marked defect, was at worst a weakness, not a vice. It arose from his excess of what in due proportion is a very noble quality—that of personal sympathy; a quality which gave tone and color to his entire life, which led him into nearly all his troubles, but which on the other hand was the element of that outspoken self which, as Dr. Holmes says, drew such multitudes to “look upon him as their brother.” To him as a man may be applied his own description of his preaching: “Not crystalline [symmetrical] nor thoroughly guarded;” with “often an error on this side and on that;” but his “average and general influence will be more mighty than any single misconception,”—and that certainly was upon a high plane of being, and in the direction of the purest and noblest aspirations.

These characteristics of Mr. Beecher have been here brought together in order to be utilized with some other facts, which have never to my knowledge been so grouped before, in considering briefly the one great trouble of his life, which for some years markedly diminished his general public influence, although the richness and power of his spiritual ministrations in his church were during that period as markedly increased.

It was one of the difficulties inseparable from his person and place that whatever related to him had to go into the newspapers. He experienced the extreme of good and the uttermost of evil that newspaper discussion can effect. The slime of whispered scandal that his especial enemies trailed about for some years reached the editors of all the chief journals, but they had the manliness to let it alone. The ecclesiastical discussions which arose when Tilton, and afterward Mrs. Moulton, were “dropped from the roll” of Plymouth Church, were fruitful occasions of partisanship and prejudgment; and when Tilton published his final accusations (swollen, by repetitions and accretions, from impropriety to hideous crime) the positions of the parties involved made newspaper discussion inevitable. The men

of Mr. Beecher's own profession, moved variously by friendship and loyal trust in a man of hitherto spotless life and reputation, and on the other hand by "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" in theologic differences and personal jealousies, took sides, and made another unusual element; while politics, religion, and every other line along which he had made himself felt, furnished friends or foes according to individual experiences of his help or his hindrance in their former doings. In short, the simple question of Henry Ward Beecher's personal innocence or guilt of what was charged against him had no fair field for settlement.

His church—a body of men and women who certainly had the keenest interest possible in knowing the true character of the man under whose influence they and their children were living, and containing a multitude who had never hesitated to oppose him and, if they could, to vote him down in church affairs when they did not agree with him—investigated the matter through a committee of men honored and trusted by the whole membership, and cleared him.

When at last the matter was brought into a court of justice by a suit against him for \$100,000 "damages," it received as full and exhaustive an exposition as ten lawyers, and a judge who gave them free range to collect and bring in all possible testimony, could accomplish in a six months' trial. The result was a disagreement of the jury, three members of which voted finally against Mr. Beecher, and nine (comprising all who were men of Christian belief) for him. Without discussing the surmised or asserted reasons for this disagreement, it is enough to say, that the verdict of the majority, agreeing as it did with the opinion of those who best knew the man, was subsequently confirmed by experts in evidence whose opinions are now accessible.

The oldest and probably the most influential clergyman among the Congregationalists of Great Britain is Rev. Henry Allon, D.D., pastor of the Union Chapel, Islington, London, and for many years editor of the *British Quarterly Review*. His church and congregation are very large, comprising more persons of eminent intelligence, position,

wealth, and effectiveness in the community than any other of the denomination, while their works of Christian charity and systematic help among the poor of London offer proof of their Christian orthodoxy. Dr. Allon is not an emotional man, like his friend and Mr. Beecher's friend, Dr. Joseph Parker, the great preacher of the City Temple; he is rather of the more exact, intellectual type, a man of scholarly culture, a preacher and writer of polished vigor, of a forcible yet chastened eloquence. For years before they had met, Dr. Allon had been a reader and admirer of Mr. Beecher's sermons (which, by the way, have been published in *The Christian World* of London, one every week, since January, 1861, without a single omission, to the present time, and still continue). In 1863 the men met, and from that time a firm friendship had bound them. When in 1869 the first volume of the "Plymouth Pulpit" sermons was issued in book-form, Dr. Allon spoke of them as follows:—

"These corrected sermons of perhaps the greatest of living preachers—a man whose heart is as warm and catholic as his abilities are great—combine fidelity and scriptural truth, great power, glorious imagination, fervid rhetoric, and vigorous reasoning, with intense human sympathy and robust common-sense."

When this trouble arose Dr. Allon was, naturally, intensely moved; and, while believing loyally in the character of his accused friend, was like many others puzzled by the days of silence and by the complications of the whole affair.

When finally the civil trial came on, Dr. Allon called to him several of his most trusted parishioners, some of them eminent in the profession of the law, and agreed with them that he and they should, each by himself, read scrupulously every part of the case as it proceeded—speeches, testimony, documents, summings up, charges, all—and get as accurate a knowledge of the whole as professional weighers of evidence could who did not see and hear the witnesses. When it was concluded, and the muddled jury rendered no verdict, this "struck jury" of experts came together and, without discussion, gave their individual ballots; the result being unanimous in the opinion that there was *no evidence to sustain the charge of the plaintiff*.

But again: the editor of the *Law Journal* (Albany, N. Y.) is Mr. Irving Browne. In an article on Mr. Beecher's death in the issue of March 19, 1887, after referring to Mr. Beecher's "excessive impulsiveness and guilelessness," which he regarded as "the secret of the great scandal," he says:—

"We recorded our convictions about this unhappy affair at the time, and should not now refer to it except to repeat the opinion of the leading counsel for the plaintiff [Tilton], the late William A. Beach. Mr. Beach was predisposed to believe Beecher guilty, but after the trial he declared in our hearing that he believed him innocent, and that his appearance and utterance when he asserted his innocence on the witness-stand were the most sublime and overpowering exhibition of the majesty of human nature that he ever beheld. He could not understand how any one could resist that solemn avowal. 'I felt, and feel now,' said he, 'that we were a pack of hounds trying in vain to drag down a noble lion.'"

In the issue of April 30th, referring to some question that had been raised as to the correctness of his memory of Mr. Beach's remarkable statement, Mr. Browne says:—

"The remarks which we quoted were addressed by Mr. Beach to the Hon. Martin I. Townsend and ourselves, and we see in an 'interview' with Mr. Townsend, published in a Troy newspaper, that he confirms our recollection of Mr. Beach's assertion that he believed Mr. Beecher innocent. Mr. Beach said other things which rendered it impossible that we should be mistaken as to his opinion. Mr. Beach, Mr. Townsend, and ourselves were old acquaintances, fellow-townsmen, near neighbors, and practiced at the Troy bar together for many years. . . . We do not see that Mr. Beach's 'integrity' is in the least involved. He simply went on after Mr. Beecher's testimony, and made the best he could of a poor case, and even his greatest admirers admitted that his argument was weak, half-hearted, and unequal to his reputation."

And later in the same issue he adds:—

"Since writing the above we have seen the *Troy Times* of April 25th, which, in speaking of our report of Mr. Beach's opinion, says: 'It finds confirmation and support from acquaintances of the late Mr. Beach in this locality. A resident of Lansingburgh says: "Mr. Beach had old friends and companions here. He declared to them his belief in the innocence of Beecher. He

said to one of them: 'I had not been four days in the trial before I was confident that he was innocent.' And he adhered years after the trial to the opinion. It seems that it is worth while to record the fact that Beach said so, freely and positively, as I am told by one of the men to-day.'" A correspondent also writes from Lansingburgh to the *Times* in the same issue: 'It is a fact that Mr. Beach, in the frankness of his intimacy with gentlemen in this village, stated that he formed, and then, when he spoke, long after the trial, held the opinion that Mr. Beecher was an innocent man, and that *the trial of Tilton v. Beecher established that conviction in his mind.*'"

A verdict in favor of the defendant, from the leading counsel of the plaintiff, contrary to his original belief when he entered the case, and established by the trial itself, ought to be enough to satisfy any really reasonable mind.

If more were needed, it might be found in the subsequent friendliness of most of the others of the plaintiff's counsel shown for the defendant in after years; and especially by the fact that Chief Justice Neilson, who presided at the trial and had formerly not known Mr. Beecher, was ever after his fast friend. And when, in the Brooklyn Academy of Music (in 1883, eight years after the trial), the fellow-citizens of the venerable clergyman assembled to celebrate his seventieth birthday with testimonials of respect and affection such as no other man has ever received from them, Justice Neilson presided at the opening of the meeting.

It is true that many hold themselves in doubt concerning this sad yet triumphant passage in Mr. Beecher's life, although they have never done what all the above-mentioned experts did, and conscientiously made themselves masters of all the facts and testimony bearing upon it. They content themselves by saying, "Upon that question the tribunal of history may render a clearer judgment than this generation has reached." Happy those—and in this case the multitude is increasing—who do not need a forty years' pilgrimage through the wilderness of collateral prejudice to find the straight and simple path out of this mystery!

The characteristics of Henry Ward Beecher which form the theme of this chapter are an inseparable part of his political career, as that was a natural outgrowth and essential portion of his whole life. The very elements that gave his intellectual qualities such a unique power in the church and the world—his love of truth, his sincerity, his frank self-revelation, his sympathy, his remarkable emotive force—were what led him into the shadow of his great trouble, but, inspired by his singular realization of the indwelling of the spirit of God in the soul of man, they also led him through the darkness into the light beyond. No one can comprehend the fact that he was sustained under that crushing weight for years, and steadily, cheerfully, and with power continued his work, showing more of the wealth of his great nature than ever before, who does not accept the idea that he was a pure-souled, Christian man, who loved his kind and absolutely trusted the God he professed to serve. No other theory will account for it. His sermons from 1873 to 1876 are the richest and strongest that he ever preached. It was in 1872-3-4, in the most trying time of the trouble, that he was invited to give three courses of "Lectures on Preaching" at the Divinity School of Yale College, in the "Lyman Beecher Lectureship" founded by his friend Henry W. Sage; and those three series of lectures, on the "Personal Elements," "Social and Religious Machinery," and "Christian Doctrines," stand as perhaps the most valuable of all his contributions to the education and inspiration of his time.

His general popularity at that period of course suffered a severe reversion. His books, his paper, his public lectures, were not wanted, and business troubles were added to his burden—a burden the heavier for him, that others had to suffer in consequence. There was but little wanting to his pain; yet the love of loyal friends and his unfaltering trust in a Father God were enough to keep his mind serene and his spirit sweet and steadfast in kindness.

In 1876 he began public lecturing again. Major J. B. Pond, who was his companion on all his lecturing tours

from that time, says in the preface to "A Summer in England with Henry Ward Beecher":—

"Excepting only Arizona and New Mexico, there was not a State or Territory in the Union in which we had not traveled together. In sunshine and in storm; by night, by day, by every conceivable mode of travel; on steamboats and rowboats; by stage, and on the backs of mules, I had journeyed at his side. I was near him in the days of 1876-8, the time of his deepest sorrow, when he was reviled and spit upon; I saw the majestic courage with which he passed through gaping crowds at railroad stations, and at the entrances of hotels and public halls,—a courage which I had not conceived mere humanity could possess. . . .

"Especially during those three darkest years was he the subject of my sad admiration. Often have I seen him on our entering a strange town hooted at by the swarming crowd, and greeted with indecent salutations. On such occasions he would pass on, seemingly unmoved, to his hotel, and remain there until the hour for his public appearance; then, confronted by great throngs, he would lift up his voice, always for humanity and godliness. . . . And when he had spoken, the assemblages would linger to draw near to and greet the man whom they had so lately despised. How changed I have often seen the public attitude toward him when he left a town into which he had come but the day before! . . .

"I thank God that it was my privilege to attend his fortunes to the end, and to see and hear on both sides of the continent, and on both sides of the ocean, demonstrations of love and confidence that came at length in so unsullied and vast a stream, from the church, his friends, his country, and his race, toward him who had brought so many thousands of them so much nearer than they had been to the common Master of us all."

Several of the discourses in this volume, of 1876, 1877, and 1878, show how he again laid hold on public questions; and as the years went by his great power was gradually re-confirmed,—those who oftenest saw and heard him being his staunchest supporters.

And thus, little by little, slowly but steadily, his sun rose once more, through the clouds and mists, until it rode high in the heavens, shining with a full and noble effulgence.



VII.

CONCLUSION.

HENRY WARD BEECHER was so large a personality, so multifarious a nature, that hundreds of writers have not only since his death but also during his life attempted to depict him, without accomplishing more than showing, each one, the phase that he himself had been able to appreciate. The pictures are mostly truthful, but all are partial. Fortunately, the theme of these chapters is not the man but only a single line of his activity, and we are dispensed from even the attempt to present a complete view.

It is true, in trying to find some of the more potent factors in his political life and influence, we have been obliged to consider his principal native qualities and the conditions of their growth and cultivation; because his political activity was not an artificial addition to his regular labors, but a spontaneous outgrowth of himself, and an integral part of his life-work. It illustrates the man. When one comprehends his acts and motives there, it is easier to see the unity and beauty of his entire life. His enthusiastic and unwavering love for God and for man gave him an access to spiritual forces and to an answering sympathy from men's hearts, that kept his power upon them vital to the last. His keen perception and industry and assimilative capacity provided an endless store of knowledge; and when, drawing from this "things new and old," he reasoned with men, and illumined good sense with the brightness of wit, with poetic attractiveness, and with the ennobling beauty of the moral and the spiritual, his hearers had confidence in his wisdom.

This was to be seen wherever he appeared, and especially among men of his own profession, who, however much they may have assumed him to be deficient in their peculiar modes of reasoning, never failed to look up to him for inspiration or be glad to get his help when his powerful personality was present. A distinguished authority has spoken of seeing him "in councils and deliberative assemblies where, when the business became intricate and entangled, and things were greatly mixed, there came in his clear, incisive sagacity, his persuasive eloquence, and his resolute will, and pulled things straight with marvelous suddenness."

His inborn honesty and candor were evident in his impulsive habit. Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., in an article in his paper, the *Christian Union*, makes a statement the truth and aptitude of which are so striking that I wish to cite it, and bear personal witness to its correctness. It refers to the goodness as one source of the greatness of Mr. Beecher:—

"He was a great preacher because he was a great and good man. He was pure as a pure woman; simple as a little child; frank to a fault. His most intimate friends never heard from his lips a suggestion of a salacious jest; I never knew the man bold enough to venture on one in his presence. He was incapable of deceit or artifice. He could conceal, when concealment was necessary, only by maintaining an absolutely impenetrable reserve. The charges of duplicity and falsehood which a foul conspiracy brought against him some years ago, were to all who knew him as intellectually absurd as they were morally monstrous."

This native and habitual sincerity, and his sturdy independence of opinion, strengthening him to stand always foremost among the battlers of right against wrong—even when his personal affiliations and sympathies acted to deter him from differences with those whom he loved—gained and kept for him the respect of mankind. His very opponents—unless small-souled enough to be utterly blinded by passion, either of personal or partisan prejudice—conceded to him a remarkable honesty in opinion and in action. And in those characteristics—faith, knowl-

edge, sagacity, sincerity, and independence—lay the reasons for his influence upon the political life of this nation, an influence unparalleled and unequaled by that of any other unofficial American citizen in the history of the land. When the length of his career is considered, and the breadth of it—whether as to the number of individuals affected or the variety of interests involved—his life will be seen to have been an inseparable and mighty element in that of the nation.

Dr. W. S. Searle, for many years Mr. Beecher's physician, writes in an article in the *North American Review*: "History records no man who outranked his fellows in more directions, and to a greater extent, and who fell below the average in fewer elements and developments of mind and soul." That is certainly a truthful, unexaggerated statement, put in a form not easy to deny. And while it finds illustration in every portion of Mr. Beecher's life, it stands especially substantiated in his political career. His public life, represented only by a few salient points in these thirty-two "Patriotic Addresses," covered actively a full half-century. What other name stands for so prolonged, so full, so steady a power; for so few mistakes and so many notable successes; for such unvaried pressure on the side of moral right, of spiritual elevation, of a loyal trust in God and a generous trust of man?

His influence on the religious life of his generation was of course greater than his political power, because it was to the former especially that he devoted himself, even while laboring in politics, reform, or the lighter realm of literary entertainment. This can be here only alluded to. In 1869 a newspaper noticing an early volume of "Plymouth Pulpit" asserted that his influence on religious thought was greater than that of all the theological seminaries put together. This friendly exaggeration, however, contained a truth; his teachings permeated the atmosphere and were felt wherever young men, earnest to think and to learn, were studying religious problems. Mr. George S. Merriam, in the *Christian Union*, in an article of Beecher reminiscences of the time when Mr. Merriam was Mr. Beech-

er's managing editor of that paper, apropos of an allusion to Plato, says: "While not naming him, of course, with Plato for originality, he was essentially of Plato's type in his interpretation of the universe by a lofty impassioned idealism; and the serene light of the Athenian sage kindled in the Christian preacher into a warmer and tenderer glow." This, however, is complemented by another trait no less influential, which perhaps is best set forth in a passage from one of Mr. Beecher's own sermons, entitled "Fact and Fancy:"—

"It has been said that everybody is either a Platonist or an Aristotelian—Plato standing for ideal philosophy and Aristotle for the real and practical. Everybody tends, it is said, to follow one or the other. No; the perfect man unites them both, and is at once Aristotelian and Platonist. His feet standing on solid fact, his head goes philosophizing, and his heart keeps the balance between them."

Dr. Abbott, again, noting the departure of the present time towards a less formal and a more practical and ethical religion than formerly, says that "in this great movement Mr. Beecher has been the leader. His relation to it is acknowledged of all men." "He has rendered his generation many and great services—moral, political, social, theological; but his greatest service is in this, that he has taught the Puritan Church that God is love."

His sermons and lecture-room talks have been for more than twenty-five years published and widely read in England, and many a man high in ecclesiastical honors there, as well as numberless students and young clergymen who loved and followed his teachings, have expressed their gratitude to him for the light he has shed on their path. Dr. Howson, the Dean of Chester, and joint author with Conybeare of the scholarly and famous "Life of St. Paul," came to Plymouth Church to see the man and hear the voice whose printed words had been so much to him. He went home with Mr. Beecher, and they had a delightful time together; and on his return to England he sent one of his own books in return for one Mr. Beecher had given him, inscribed, "For gold I give thee brass."

Dr. Joseph Parker, the eloquent London preacher, his unswerving friend for twenty-three years, writes:—

“As a preacher I believe the whole pulpit of the world would give him the palm. When Charles Kingsley heard him he sat and wept like a child through the whole discourse, and when it was concluded he said: ‘Mr. Beecher has said the very things I have been trying to say ever since I entered the Christian pulpit.’ The Dean of Canterbury said to Mr. Beecher himself: ‘There is one thing, Mr. Beecher, for which we must all thank you, and that is for what you have taught us respecting the Fatherhood of God.’ When he went [in 1886] through England and Scotland he was hailed on every side by ministers who bore the most grateful testimony to the happy influence which his ministry had exercised upon their spiritual life.”

And this kind of evidence could be multiplied indefinitely. If he was through all those long years thus influencing the *teachers* of religion, and opening to their souls an entrance into the “lofty and impassioned idealism” in which his own spirit so largely dwelt, how incalculable his influence upon the millions who hear and read the teachings of these thousands of instructors! Truly he was a mighty man; and the marvel is that his might was so unselfishly exercised for the right.

In his last notable contribution to religious teaching—his sermons on “Evolution and Religion”—he simply gave deliberate utterance to a line of thought which he had been following, at first vaguely, afterwards with more clearness and certainty, for many years. In his preface he says:—

“The universal physical fact of evolution, which a widely accepted philosophy of our day postulates as a theory of the Divine method of creation, is one which so naturally and simply fits many a puzzling lock, that it is gratefully seized by many who seem to themselves to have been shut out from hope and from the truth.

“For myself, while finding no need of changing my idea of the Divine personality because of new light upon His mode of working, I have hailed the Evolutionary philosophy with joy. . . . And that it will furnish—nay, is already bringing—to the aid of religious truth as set forth in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ a new and powerful aid, fully in line with other marked developments of God’s providence in this His world, I fervently believe.”

In a private letter (1885) he writes: "It is the fruit of my life's thinking, and has come not from books but from the life of my own soul." It was a vital and helpful belief to him; and, whatever may be its fate as a basis of men's religious conceptions, he used it with power to help and vitalize the dying faith of many a man who received it with gratitude, and made it possible for many a preacher and teacher to read the signs of the times in scientific thought—not as a hindrance, but as a new inspiration, in the interpretation of God's revelation in his word and in his works.

Of the addresses in this volume it is not too much to say that they constitute a glowing picture of the times that gave them birth. Their statements, often violently disputed when first set forth, have hardened into accepted truth; and their matter and style—for terseness, clearness of reasoning, aptitude of illustration, keenness of wit, power of appeal, and all the elements of effective eloquence—will stand among the most enduring monuments of the orator's genius.

In many a passage his words now stand as prophecy fulfilled.

Lincoln, Grant, and Beecher are generally acknowledged to have been the three greatest men developed by the colossal contests of their era. Yet it is worthy of note, that both the civil hero and the military hero of the War owed their high eminence largely to the vast power of a Nation, entrusted to their able hands in official responsibility, while the power exerted by Henry Ward Beecher was simply that of his own individuality. His great church, his extensive effect upon the religious thought and teaching of his time, his wide journalistic influence, his popularity as a lecturer, his general acceptability as *the* man to voice the public feeling on all sorts of occasions, his political influence at home, his triumphant changing of the course of a stubborn nation abroad, his eminence in so many spheres of activity during so long a life,—these all grew out of the magnificent forces of the man himself.

And the man himself, therefore, is what the volume of "Patriotic Addresses," in spite of its limited scope, will help to show.

Descriptions and biographies of him are but partial sidelights. Real knowledge of him can be had only from his own utterances, where the living flame of his genius burns imperishably. He held no office ; he bore no professional label ; he wore no sectarian badge or party collar ; he was neither President, nor General, nor Doctor of Divinity ; but above all rank, beyond all title, stands and will stand, the unadorned, yet unforgotten, name of HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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